

Gentianella cerina

COMMON NAME

Auckland Island gentian

SYNONYMS

Gentiana cerina Hook.f., *G. cerina* f. *suberecta* Kirk, *G. cerina* var. *suberecta* (Kirk) Cheeseman, *G. campbellii* Hombr. et Jacquinot ex Decne, *Chionogentias cerina* (Hook.f.) L.G. Adams

FAMILY

Gentianaceae

AUTHORITY

Gentianella cerina (Hook.f.) T.N.Ho et S.W.Liu

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE, RR

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE, RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: IE

2004 | Range Restricted

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: Auckland Islands

HABITAT

Coastal turflands, *Chionochloa antarctica* tussocklands and *Poa littorosa* grasslands, *Marsippospermum gracile* and *Pleurophyllum hookeri* sedgeland or bare ground on summit fellfields, rarely in forest

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Plants polycarpic, height in flower 90–170 mm. Caudex unbranched or branched, 110–200 mm long. Flowering stems terminal only or terminal and lateral, 3–12 per plant, 1.1–3.1 mm diameter, lateral flowering stems decumbent, flowering stem leaves 3–4 pairs per stem (not applicable in cases where no rosette is present on multi-branched plants), lowest pedicels from ½ up flowering stem to near apex of flowering stem. Rosette of leaves absent, not very distinct, or distinct from flowering plants leaves; leaves narrowly elliptic, 36.6–53.1 × 8.4–12.6 mm wide, flat, not recurved, margins thickened, apex rounded and retuse; petiole distinct, 11–13 mm long, 4.7–6.3 mm wide at leaf base. Flowering stem leaves the same but smaller. Pedicels 1 or 2 per leaf axil, 6.2–17.8 mm long, 1.2–1.3 mm diameter. Flowers 15 to more than 100 per plant, 9.9–14.1 mm long. Calyx 9.3–12.2 mm long, hairs at calyx–corolla fusion line present; lobes 7.5–10.3 mm long, 2.4–3.4 mm wide at base, plane, apices obtuse (widest near the apex), margins smooth, sinus hairs absent. Corolla 8.4–11.8 mm long, white or tinted red to purple, veins colourless or purple; tube 2.1–4.4 mm long; lobes 6.3–8.8 × 3.8–5.0 mm, hairs below sinus absent or present; nectary 1.2–1.5 mm from corolla base. Filaments 4.9–6.9 mm long from corolla base, 0.70–0.85 mm wide. Anthers 0.9–1.7 mm long, extrorse at anthesis; pollen yellow. Stigma purple or colourless. Ovules 13–37 per ovary. Capsule 6.5–12 mm long.



Enderby Island. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.



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SIMILAR TAXA

Gentianella cerina differs from the only other species present on the Auckland Islands, *G. concinna* by its perennial growth habit; decumbent flowering stems; calyces that are 9.3–12.2 mm long, and pandurate calyx lobes which are rounded at the apices, with the corolla shorter than the calyx and with leaves which are 36–53 × 8.4–12.6 mm

FLOWERING

December –April

FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, White

FRUITING

March - May

LIFE CYCLE

Seeds dispersed by ballistic projection, wind and water (Thorsen et al., 2009)

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild

THREATS

A Naturally Uncommon, range-restricted, island endemic. Abundant on the islands it is under no obvious threat. The Auckland Islands are administered as a Nature Reserve and are part of a World Heritage Park with access strictly controlled by the New Zealand Department of Conservation.

ETYMOLOGY

gentianella: Little *Gentiana* (named after Gentius, 6th century king of Illyria, who found the roots of the yellow gentian to have a healing effect on his malaria-stricken troops)

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (October 2004). Description modified from Glenny (2004)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Glenny, D. 2004: A revision of the genus *Gentianella* in New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 42: 361-530.
Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285-309

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/gentianella-cerina/>