

Gentianella corymbifera subsp. gracilis

COMMON NAME

grassland gentian, tall gentian

SYNONYMS

None (described in 2004)

FAMILY

Gentianaceae

AUTHORITY

Gentianella corymbifera subsp. *gracilis* Glenny

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (East of the Main Divide from mid Canterbury to Southland)

HABITAT

Montane to alpine. In modified short-tussock and tall-tussock grasslands, within intermontane basins, on moraine downs, outwash terraces, and lower hillslopes. Also on schist and limestone rock outcrops near creeks



Lake Heron tarn. Photographer: Alice Shanks, Date taken: 01/03/2013, Licence: CC BY-SA.



Lake Heron tarn. Photographer: Alice Shanks, Date taken: 01/03/2013, Licence: CC BY-SA.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Plants biennial, rarely perennial, height in flower 90–370 mm. Caudex unbranched, 15–70 mm long. Root branched or unbranched, 1.3–11.3 mm diameter at stem base. Flowering stems terminal only or terminal and lateral with more slender lateral branches from among the rosette leaves, 1–7 per plant, terminal flowering stem 1.3–7.0 mm diameter at base, green, tinted crimson or purple-black, lateral flowering stems erect, internodes 2–6 pairs per stem, lowest pedicels from near base of flowering stem, halfway up flowering stem, or near apex of flowering stem. Rosette of leaves present and distinct from flowering stem leaves, leaves narrowly elliptic to elliptic or ovate, leaf apex acute to rounded, 15.0–127.0 × 5.0–11.3 mm, sometimes tinted crimson or purple-black below or on the petiole, usually flat, sometimes V-shaped or channelled at the petiole, petiole 10–40 mm long, 1.5–5.2 mm wide at leaf base. Flowering stem leaves ovate, apex acute, sessile. Flowers 7–110 per plant, 11–23 mm long, rarely female. Pedicels 1–2 per leaf axil, 10–30 mm long, 0.64–1.1 mm diameter. Calyx 5.2–8.5 mm long, green or tinted purple-black, crimson, or bronze; lobes 2.9–4.4 × 1.7–2.8 mm, plane, apices acute, margins smooth or minutely denticulate, hairs at sinuses present or absent. Corolla 11.0–15.3 mm long, white, rarely pale violet or with veins violet; tube 2.5–12 mm long; lobes 7.5–15.5 × 5.1–10.2 mm, hairs below sinus present; nectary 0.7–1.5 mm from corolla base. Filaments 6.4–9.2 mm long from corolla base, 1.5–2.7 mm wide. Anthers 1.5–3.2 mm long, anther wall yellow or blue-black, mouth yellow, extrorse, rarely introrse at anthesis. Stigma colourless. Ovules 36–68 per ovary. Capsules 12–19 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from subsp. *corymbifera* by its usually biennial life form; by the terminal flowering stem 1.3–7.0 mm cf. 3.0–11.3 mm diameter when fresh; leaves 15–127 × 5.0–11.3 mm cf. 41–168 × 6.5–31 mm wide; calyx lobes 1.7–2.8 mm cf. 2.7–4.0 mm wide; corolla 11.0–15.3 mm cf. 14.0–21.1 mm long; and by the filaments 0.6–1.2 mm cf. 1.1–1.6 mm wide.

FLOWERING

December – April

FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, White

FRUITING

February – June

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild

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)

corymbifera: Corymb-bearing

gracilis: Slender

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

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.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/gentianella-corymbifera-subsp-gracilis/>