

Geum divergens

COMMON NAME

geum, avens

SYNONYMS

Oncostylus divergens (Cheeseman) F.Bolle

FAMILY

Rosaceae

AUTHORITY

Geum divergens Cheeseman

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 70$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

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

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island, Hanmer Range (Miromiro, Mt Captain, Mt Charon)

HABITAT

Subalpine to alpine (c.1300-1600 m a.s.l.). Colonising sandstone rock (crevices, ledges, shattered rock surfaces), fine colluvium, and erosion pavement in subalpine forest, scrub and tussock grassland.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Short, stout herb up to 180 mm tall at flowering. Rhizome stout, woody, and creeping, clothed with long persistent, fibrous leaf base remnants. Leaves rugose, adaxially initially dull light green fading to yellowish-red, abaxially paler. Basal leaves numerous, up to 60 mm long, imparipinnate; lateral leaflets 2-4(-6) pairs, minute, terminal leaflet conspicuous, 20-35 mm long, orbicular-reniform, indistinctly lobed, coarsely crenate-dentate; margins densely ciliate with long white hairs, and minute pink hydathodes; adaxial surface otherwise sparsely villous, abaxial glabrescent to glabrous. Scapes up to 180 mm tall, slender, densely pubescent, hairs in mixtures of short and long eglandular hairs; bracts 2-5, up to 20 mm long, lanceolate, toothed, incised, rarely pinnate. Flowers 1-3(-5), up to 35 mm diameter. Calyx-lobes ovate-lanceolate, acute to acuminate, sometimes with minute bracteoles at the base, pubescent. Petals 12-15 mm long, white, obovate, obtuse. Disc green. Anthers yellow. Achenes pilose, gradually narrowed into a long glabrous, hooked style remnant.



Mount Captain. Type locality. Jan 1993.
Photographer: Brian P. Molloy, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Mount Captain. Type locality. Jan 1993.
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SIMILAR TAXA

Allied to *Geum uniflorum* Buchanan with which it shares a strongly rhizomatous growth habit and large flowers. From that species it is distinguished by its larger overall dimensions, densely compact, leafy rosettes; leaves which are rugose, pale green above fading to yellowish red with age; dentate-crenate leaf margins which are densely fringed with white hairs and minute pink hydathodes; pubescent petioles and peduncles with intermixed long unicellular eglandular hairs; and 1-5 white flowers up to 35 mm diameter, with a central green eye and yellow anthers.

FLOWERING

November - December

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, White

FRUITING

January - February

LIFE CYCLE

Pappate achenes are dispersed by wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown in pots in an alpine house, and in cooler climates within a rock garden. Best grown from fresh seed.

THREATS

Not Threatened - listed because it occupies a very small area within which it is very common.

ETYMOLOGY

geum: Possibly from the Greek *geuo* 'to give a pleasant flavour', the roots of some species being aromatic.

divergens: From the Latin *divergens*, meaning divergent

WHERE TO BUY

Not Commercially Available

ETYMOLOGICAL NOTES

The name *divergens* refers to the flower colour of this species, which in the type is yellow, and so marked this species out from all of the other white-flowered New Zealand species. However all wild plants seen have white flowers, and it is now known that upon drying the white petals of all New Zealand *Geum* fade to yellow. As the type of *Geum divergens* was named 23 years after its collection it seems that during the time that elapsed between the initial collection and description the white petals of the specimen had faded to yellow. This, of course, caused considerable confusion with field botanists who were searching the Hanmer Range for an apparently unique yellow-flowered *Geum* for some 77 years! Description based on herbarium material.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet Prepared by P.J. de Lange (1 August 2004). Description based on Allan (1961) and Cheeseman (1915)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H.H. 1961: *Flora of New Zealand*. Vol. I. Government Printer, Wellington.

Cheeseman, T. F. 1916: New species of plants. *Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 48: 210-215.

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

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/geum-divergens/>