

Leptinella plumosa

SYNONYMS

Cotula plumosa Hook.f., *Cotula plumosa* (Hook.f.) Hook.f.

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Leptinella plumosa Hook.f.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 52

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

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

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

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

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: SO, IE

2004 | Range Restricted

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. Auckland, Campbell and Antipodes Islands. Also present on Macquarie, Kerguelen, Marion and Crozet Islands

HABITAT

Primarily coastal, where it grows in saltmarshes, wet depressions, on bare ground in seal haulouts and sea bird nesting grounds, on exposed peat, and amongst boulders. It occasionally extends well inland, where it grows around tussocks - often near albatross colonies.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Monoecious, short creeping, somewhat variable perennial, initially rather fleshy, soon hard and more or less woody, glabrous or finely hairy, hairs when present a uniform covering of tangled, lanate hairs; branches single or clustered around flowering nodes; leaves 4-8, tufted around shoot apices, older ones spaced up to 40 mm apart. Short shoots usually absent, if present sparse. Roots confined to older stems up to 1 mm diameter. Leaves variable in size and dissection, 1-2 pinnatifid, 50-200 x 10-60 mm; blade 40-120 mm long, light green, elliptic to broadly elliptic, rather soft, glabrous to finely villous, especially along rhachis, midrib not raised on ventral surface; pinnae 5-20 pairs, slightly overlapping, cut to rhachis, elliptic; tertiary pinnae 0-6, on outer margin of secondary pinnae, oblong or narrowly triangular; final divisions acute. Peduncles 60-120 mm, shorter than leaves, covered in dense, deciduous lanate hairs, usually ebracteate, bract if present simply or partially divided. Capitula 10 mm diameter; surface hemispherical; involucre hemispherical; involucre bracts 20, subequally biseriate, oblong, elliptic, green, thick, finely lanate hairy when young, margins (or apices only) bearing a prominent, broad, wide scarious band; pistillate florets 90-260, 3-6-seriate, 2.75 mm long, almost straight, yellow-green; corolla twice as long as wide, dentition equal; staminate florets fewer or the same number. Cypselas 1.9 x 0.8 mm, golden-brown, obscurely 4-angled, not compressed, faintly and finely wrinkled.



Campbell Island. Photographer: David A. Norton, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Campbell Island. Photographer: David A. Norton, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA

The stout habit, thick, fleshy to subwoody rhizomes, light green finely divided, large and very soft, feathery leaves, and large green capitula borne on short peduncles serve to distinguish this distinctive subantarctic species from any other in the genus. It can however, be rather variable in its size depending on local conditions. *L. plumosa* is said to form hybrids with *L. lanata* Hook.f., *L. potentillina* F.Muell., and *L. dispersa* (D.G.Lloyd) D.G.Lloyd et C.J.Webb subsp. *dispersa*, the only other species of the genus with which it is sympatric in the New Zealand part of its range.

FLOWERING

September - April

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Yellow

FRUITING

October - June

LIFE CYCLE

Papery cypselae are dispersed by wind and possibly attachment (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Probably rather difficult to grow. It has been cultivated in the past within New Zealand but from all accounts rather unsuccessfully.

THREATS

Not threatened. A narrow range, local endemic, common within its known habitats

ETYMOLOGY

leptinella: From the Greek word leptos (meaning slender, thin or delicate), referring to the ovary

plumosa: Feathery

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 31 August 2006. Description from Lloyd (1972) - as *Cotula plumosa*

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Lloyd, D.G. 1972: A revision of the New Zealand, Subantarctic, and South American species of *Cotula*, section *Leptinella*. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 10: 277-372.

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/leptinella-plumosa/>