

Leucogenes leontopodium

COMMON NAME

North Island edelweiss

SYNONYMS

Helichrysum leontopodium Hook.f., *Gnaphalium colensoi* Hook.f.

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Leucogenes leontopodium (Hook.f.) Beauverd

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

NVS CODE

LEULEO

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (from Mt Hikurangi and the Central Volcanic Plateau south to the Tararua Ranges), and in the South Island (Richmond Range)

HABITAT

Subalpine to alpine. On rock outcrops, cliff faces, and crevices. Usually in sites free of much surrounding vegetation.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stock stout, woody; stems much-branched, decumbent, woody at base; branchlets ascending. Leaves sessile, 8-20 × 4-5 mm, 3-5-nerved at base, linear- to lanceolate-oblong, acute to subacute, clad on both surfaces in silvery-white to yellowish, shining, appressed tomentum; basal leaves crowded in subrosettes, cauline densely imbricate to rather distant. Peduncles up to 100 mm long, clad in appressed foliaceous bracts. Capitula 8-15, congested into dense glomerules up to 25 mm diameter, subtended by up to 20 densely woolly lvs up to 20 mm long, forming a conspicuous white ray. Involucral bracts linear-lanceolate, c.5 mm. long, scarious with basal stiffening, toothed and ciliate towards acute apex, ± woolly on back towards tip. Achenes c.1 mm. long, pappus-hairs c.4 mm long



Tararua Forest Park. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 28/03/1997, Licence: CC BY.



Tararua Forest Park. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 28/03/1997, Licence: CC BY.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from *Leucogenes grandiceps* (Hook.f.) Beauverd by the more compact growth habit; by the basal leaves crowded into sub-rosettes; by the larger leaves (8-20 cf. 5-10 mm long) with acute to subacute leaf apices rather than obtuse (rarely apiculate); and by the leaves of the ray up to 20 mm long. Distinguished from *L. neglecta* Molloy and *L. tarahaoa* Molloy by its diploid ($2n = 28$), rather than tetraploid ($2n = 56$, *L. neglecta*) or octoploid ($2n = 112$) chromosome number. *Leucogenes neglecta* further differs from *L. leontopodium* by its long thin stems, narrowly elliptic acute leaves and floral bracts, and uniform silvery-blue colour, while *L. tarahaoa* differs by its compact, cushion forming habit, and silvery white leaves.

FLOWERING

November - March

FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

FRUITING

January - April

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from cuttings and fresh seed. Excellent in a pot within an alpine house, and in non-humid climates can be grown in rock gardens. Provided the root stock is kept cool can be grown in most lowland situations.

ETYMOLOGY

leucogenes: White genus

WHERE TO BUY

Occasionally available from specialist native plant nurseries.

ATTRIBUTION

Description modified from Allan (1961)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

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/leucogenes-leontopodium/>