

Lobelia fatiscens

SYNONYMS

New Zealand plants have wrongly been called *Isotoma fluviatilis* (R.Br.) F.Muell. ex Benth., which is an Australian endemic.

FAMILY

Campanulaceae

AUTHORITY

Lobelia fatiscens Heenan

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP, RR

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: RR

2009 | At Risk – Declining

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island: Nelson (mainly westerly but also known from Lake Rotoiti) and the West Coast to Fiordland (Milford Sound).

HABITAT

Usually found growing in marginal turf and amongst herbs on the margins of lakes lagoons, stream banks, swamps, and among sand dunes in wet depressions. Also recorded from muddy riverbanks. Sometimes found wholly submerged in water up to 0.5 m deep. Also recorded from damp ground within open stands of kahikatoa (*Leptospermum scoparium*) and kamahi (*Weinmannia racemosa*), and in modified habitats such as roadside ditches and pasture.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).



Druggans Dam, Aorere Goldfields, Golden Bay.
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Druggans Dam, Aorere Goldfields, Golden Bay.
Photographer: Simon Walls, Date taken:
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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Creeping, prostrate, glabrous herb; rooting at leaf nodes. Leaves alternate, upright to spreading; lamina 7.0–12.0 x 2.0–5.0 mm, lanceolate, narrowly elliptic, to broadly elliptic, notably narrow when submerged or shaded, green, sometimes blotched purple-brown, midvein faint, lateral veins faint to obscure, margin shallowly toothed to sinuate; petiole 1.0–1.5 x 0.4–0.7 mm. Flowers hermaphrodite, resupinate, axillary, solitary; peduncle 1.0–17.0 x 0.4–0.6 mm. Calyx with short tube adnate to ovary; lobes 5, 1.1–1.7 x 0.2–0.5 mm, green, narrow triangular to lanceolate; apex subacute and with conspicuous usually translucent tip. Corolla 5–6 mm long, 3.5–5.0 mm diam. when open, white to lavender; tube 1.5–3.0 x 1.0–1.5 mm diameter, entire, usually glabrous, inner surface rarely with a few hairs; lobes 4–5, lobes 2.2–3.5 x 1.0–1.2 mm, narrow-lanceolate, recurved, glabrous, apex subacute. Filaments 3.0–3.6 x 0.2–0.3 mm, fused below anthers, adnate to corolla tube on lower third, white in distal part, becoming translucent and flushed green toward proximal part. Anthers 0.6–1.1 mm long, united into a tube around style, purple-black, glabrate to sparsely hairy, curved over at top, with small central pore < 0.1 mm diameter; 2 awns and several hairs present at apex on lower anthers, awns up to c. 0.2 mm long, hairs up to c. 0.1 mm long. Nectary annular, c. 0.15 mm high, green; apex usually with hairs, hairs c. 0.2 mm long. Ovary 1.9–2.7 x 1.0–1.2 mm wide, green, apex obtuse. Style 4.0–4.2 mm long, 0.2–0.3 mm wide, white, exerted beyond anthers. Stigma bilobed, lobes 0.3–0.4 x 0.4–0.5 mm, pink, subtended by whorl of hairs, hairs c. 0.2 mm long. Capsule 2.8–5.0 x 2.0–2.5 mm; thin-walled, seeds visible through wall, indehiscent and without apical valves, disintegrating with age; apex crowned with persistent style base; base obtuse to cuneate. Seed broadly elliptic to almost circular, slightly compressed, 0.4–0.6 mm long; apex, testa orange to olive, semi-glossy, glabrous, minutely punctate.

SIMILAR TAXA

Lobelia fatiscens is distinguished from *Lobelia ionantha* (formerly *Hypsela rivalis*) by its leaves which are generally narrowly lanceolate to broadly elliptic; by the corolla petals which are moderately recurved rather than flat; and by the staminal filaments which are adnate only to the lower third of the corolla tube. From *Lobelia angulata* it differs by the leaves which are mostly entire (rarely with a few faint teeth); corolla which is not split to the base at the back, stamens adnate to the middle of the corolla tube; and by the thin-walled and indehiscent fruit.

FLOWERING

August - January

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

October - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed, rooted pieces and by the division of whole plants. However, can be fickle and difficult to maintain. Unlike the true *Isotoma fluviatilis*, which has attractive blue flowers, the New Zealand plant has relatively small, inconspicuous greenish - white flowers.

ETYMOLOGY

lobelia: Named after Lobel, pioneer botanist

fatiscens: From the Latin fatiscens 'disintegrating, crumbling'

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet compiled by P.J. de Lange (12 August 2008). Description from Heenan et al. (2008).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Heenan, P.B.; Knox, E.B.; Courtney, S.P.; Johnson, P.N.; Dawson, M.I. 2008: Generic placement in *Lobelia* and revised taxonomy for New Zealand species previously in *Hypsela* and *Isotoma* (Lobeliaceae). *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 46: 87-100.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/lobelia-fatiscens/>