

Myosotis forsteri

COMMON NAME

Forster's forget-me-not

SYNONYMS

Myosotis hamiltonii Colenso; *Myosotis tenuifolia* Colenso pro parte;
Myosotis polyantha Colenso pro parte

FAMILY

Boraginaceae

AUTHORITY

Myosotis forsteri Lehm.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

MYOFOR

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North and South Islands (from the Mangamuka Range southwards but scarce north of the Waikato)

HABITAT

Forest and streamsides. Usually riparian but also found in forest around springs, seepages and on damp, shaded rock outcrops (especially limestone or a similar base-rich rock)



Kaingaroa, April. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Kaingaroa, April. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Sparingly to heavily branched laxly tufted perennial herb. Rosette usually single sometimes up to 3 present, leaf-lamina broad-elliptic to orbicular, 15-60 × 10-45 mm, tip rounded, ± mucronate, petiole equally to or longer than lamina-length, narrow and rather well-defined; hairs short, stiff or ± flexuous, usually appressed, sparse and not overlapping, not retrorse on undersurface. Lateral branches few to many, basally lax otherwise ascending to erect, sometimes branched, 80-600 mm long, internodes usually equal to or longer than leaves. Stem-leaves few, lower ones spatulate, upper sessile and broad-ovate, c. 10-15 × 6-13 mm. long, tip rounded and mucronate; hairs short, usually appressed, sparse on both surfaces. Cymes ebracteate, except sometimes towards base, 6-10-flowered, mostly simple; internodes between fruits usually greater in length than calyx; pedicels up to 6 mm long, up to 10 to a stem in fruit. Calyx 2.5-5.0 mm long, lobes barely cut off half calyx length, rather broad, subacute; hairs sparse, mostly confined to margins and ribs, long and straight above, shorter and slightly hooked towards base. Corolla white, 2-6 mm diameter, tube 2-4 mm long, cylindrical but widest at mouth, lobes broadly rounded; filaments very short, fixed below scales, anthers c.0.5 mm long, partially exerted above scales; style < calyx in fruit, stigma capitate. Nutlet 1.2-1.8 × 0.9-1.1 mm, elliptic, ovate elliptic or broadly ovate-elliptic, black.

SIMILAR TAXA

Myosotis forsteri is recognised by the combination of having ebracteate inflorescences borne on laxly ascending to erect branches; calyx-hairs showing a continuous range of sizes with many or all of the larger ones not hooked (uncinate), and by the absence of retrorse hairs on the undersides of the rosette-leaves. The leaf hairs of this species are characteristically short and sparse, the inflorescences long and laxly ascending to erect with the internodes between the fruits longer than the calyx length. These attributes encompass a wide range of diversity and there is little doubt that the current circumscription of *Myosotis forsteri* contains a number of additional units worthy of formal description (see taxonomic notes). *Myosotis forsteri* can be difficult to distinguish from the much rarer *M. petiolata* var. *pansa* (see description of that species) and especially *M. venosa* (which has anthers exerted above corolla scales and subtle hair differences). Indeed Colenso even named two species *M. polyantha* and *M. tenuifolia* which included elements of both *M. forsteri* and *M. venosa*! In the field *Myosotis forsteri* is probably best distinguished by the distinctly petiolate, dark green oval leaves with orange dotting on the paler (silvery) leaf undersides. In this species the rosettes are often solitary or if multiple - rather open and lax with the inflorescences typically lax near the base, then ascending to erect, rather elongated and bearing widely spaced flowers held at a wide angle from the stem.

FLOWERING

October - April

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

November - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown and tolerant of a wide range of conditions (except full sun and drying out). It grows well in a moist but free draining soil, and does best in semi-shade. Fresh seed germinates readily, and plants once established, freely set seed, producing numerous seedlings. However, in humid climates plants are prone to powdery mildew infections, and like many other indigenous forget-me-nots plants are prone rust infections, which make the leaves swollen and unsightly.

ETYMOLOGY

myosotis: Mouse-eared

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Myosotis forsteri is a species complex in urgent need to revision. There are a wide range of distinct, true-breeding races spanning the country which are currently placed within a broad taxonomic concept of this species. Many of them probably merit recognition at species rank

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 February 2008. Description based on Allan (1961).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/myosotis-forsteri/>