

Myosotis lytteltonensis

COMMON NAME

Lyttelton forget-me-not

SYNONYMS

Myosotis australis var. *lytteltonensis* Laing et A.Wall

FAMILY

Boraginaceae

AUTHORITY

Myosotis lytteltonensis (Laing et A.Wall) de Lange

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

MYOLYT

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 40

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, So

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, Sp

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, Sp

2004 | Threatened – Nationally Critical

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North and South Islands. In the North Island formerly recorded from Owhiro Bay, Wellington. In the South Island similar plants have been collected from the Swale River, inland Kaikoura Range in the early part of last century. All current records come from Banks Peninsula, in several sites overlooking Lyttelton Harbour.

HABITAT

Generally coastal, on cliff faces, but also found inland. Usually on sparsely vegetated rock ledges, crevices and rock overhangs, nearly always in damp and shady places.



Plant in flower, Ex Cult. Ohinewai.
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Myosotis australis var. *lytteltonensis* plant in flower. Photographer: Shannel Courtney, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Short-lived robust, perennial herb. Rosette leaves on stout petioles 30–70 mm long, sheathing at base; lamina 25–40 x 8–15 mm, broadly oblong to spatulate, obtuse to retuse, apex apiculate, all parts hairy, hairs, long silky, more or less appressed. Lateral branches numerous 150 x 450(–800) mm long, decumbent to prostrate, trailing, ascending at tips, copiously covered in straight, somewhat appressed hairs. Upper stem leaves petiolate becoming sessile, 25–35 x 15–30 mm. Inflorescence cymose, with many subsidiary laterals. Flowers usually white, or white with yellow eye, 10 mm diam. Pedicels 2–5(–10) mm. Calyx tubular, 5-lobed, lobes linear to linear-lanceolate, acuminate, outer surface densely invested with straight hairs. Corolla tube funnelform, twice calyx length, scales 5; lobes 5, shortly-obtuse to rounded. Anthers inserted within tube, tips scarcely reaching scales. Style reaching or exceeding corolla scales. Nutlets ovoid, glossy, greyish black.

SIMILAR TAXA

Similar to *Myosotis forsteri* from which it differs by the under surfaces of the rosette leaves which lack orange glands and have few if any retrorse hairs, and by the larger, more deeply cut and hairier calyces. Not closely allied to any of the other entities currently included in New Zealand under the Australian named *M. australis* R.Br.

FLOWERING

(September–) October – January. However plants may be found flowering throughout the year

FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

FRUITING

May be present throughout the year

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and does well in a sunny situation. An excellent pot-plant. Inclined to be short-lived, and dislikes humidity. In humid climates it is prone to powdery mildew and other fungi, and can be difficult to grow.

THREATS

The North Island occurrence was destroyed by quarry operations. There have been no recent collections from the Kaikoura region. The Banks Peninsula populations were at severe risk from feral goats, most of which have now been eliminated from the peninsula. Currently Banks Peninsula plants are threatened by weeds which have invaded many of its bluff, ledge and cliff habitats.

ETYMOLOGY

myosotis: Mouse-eared

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Myosotis australis var. *lytteltonensis* was elevated to species rank by de Lange in de Lange et al. (2010).

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for the NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2006. Description by P.J. de Lange and subsequently published in de Lange et al. (2010).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

de Lange, P.J.; Heenan, P.B.; Norton, D.A.; Rolfe, J.R.; Sawyer, J.W.D. 2010: Threatened Plants of New Zealand. Canterbury University Press, Christchurch.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/myosotis-lytteltonensis/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

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