

Myosotis spatulata

SYNONYMS

Myosotis spatulata var. *radicata* L.B.Moore, *Myosotis orbiculata* G.Simpson

FAMILY

Boraginaceae

AUTHORITY

Myosotis spatulata G.Forst.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

MYOSPA

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 46

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, EF, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, EF, Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP

2004 | Sparse

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North, South and Chatham Islands.

HABITAT

Coastal to subalpine (0-1300 m a.s.l.). Usually on or near rock outcrops, under rock overhangs, on ledges or amongst rubble in forest or shrubland. Sometimes found on clay banks or open ground under dense forest, along track margins, or in alluvial shrubland. Very rarely found as an urban weed in shaded pavement or in shaded sites amongst mosses within excessively mowed lawns.



Myosotis spatulata. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Flowering *Myosotis spatulata*. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Mostly decumbent, widely spreading, perennial herb with adventitious roots on lateral branches; these often present to apices unless laterals are ascending. Petioles slender, 10-15 x 1-2 mm wide, purple-black to green, finely to conspicuously hispid to silky hairy. Rosette leaves 15-40 x 5-20 mm, dark green to yellow-green, sometimes with purple-red margins, orbicular, broadly ovate to broadly elliptic, apex retuse, mucronate, mucro 0.1-0.3 mm long; hairs on upper lamina surface short to long, straight, more or less appressed, not crowded, on lower surface similar but erect. Lateral branches 50-600 mm long, usually decumbent, sometimes scending at apices, often heavily branched, sometimes bearing subsidiary rosettes subtending flowers; frequently rooting at leaf junctions; internodes equal to or greater than leaves; cauline leaves shortly petiolate, 5-20 x 5-20 mm, orbicular to broadly elliptic, hairs as for rosette-leaves. Flowers solitary in leaf axils, sometimes up to 15 in sequence along lateral branchlets, pedicels 0.5-6 mm long in fruit. Calyx 1-3 mm, lobed almost to base, lobes narrow, acute, spreading widely in fruit; hairs spreading, scattered over lobes and base, of varying sizes, the largest more or less hooked. Corolla white 1-4 mm diameter, tube cylindric, lobes spreading to patent, never flat; filaments fixed at level of scales, anthers position 1/2 up lobes, anthers < 1 mm long, yellow; style up to 3 mm long; stigma clavate. Nutlet 1-1.5 x 0.6-1 mm, black to grey-black, ovate, apex obtuse, base rounded.

SIMILAR TAXA

Closest to *M. matthewsii* which as Moore defined it is endemic to the far north of New Zealand. Both species have an almost flat, widely creeping growth habit, though *M. matthewsii* tends to be more erect and in most populations lacks the adventitious roots seen in most *M. spatulata* plants. The stem hairs of *M. spatulata* are slightly spreading to distinctly shaggy, the calyx hairs are rarely uniform in size and the largest are usually hooked or nearly so, in most *M. spatulata* populations the flowers have narrow corollas, short stamens (often nearly included within the corolla tube) and an clavate stigma, while *M. matthewsii* has short and closely appressed stem hairs, uniformly short and straight calyx hair, and broadly open corollas with distinctly exerted stamens and a capitate stigma. Often confused with *M. tenericaulis* (see notes under that species).

FLOWERING

September - March

FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

FRUITING

September - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed. One of the few indigenous *Myosotis* that seeds freely and self-establishes in most garden situations. This species thrives in poorly drained, to well drained, shaded sites. Although easily grown it is unlikely to prove popular in cultivation because it has, by and large, rather small inconspicuous flowers. Some selection of the larger flowered forms may improve its popularity in cultivation.

THREATS

Widespread but never common at any particular location (sometimes it is known from just one rock ledge or overhang for an entire district). Despite its natural scarcity it seems quite able to cope with weed invasions, partly because it can tolerate extreme heavy shade and a range of soil/substrate moisture regimes from drought prone to saturated.

ETYMOLOGY

myosotis: Mouse-eared

spatulata: Like a flattened spoon

TAXONOMIC NOTES

The relationship of *Myosotis spatulata* and *M. matthewsii* needs further critical assessment. *Myosotis spatulata* var. *radicata* is here regarded as part of the range of variation seen in *M. spatulata* - which as currently circumscribed is a very variable species.

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-spatulata/>