

Myosotis traversii var. cinerascens

SYNONYMS

Myosotis cinerascens Petrie

FAMILY

Boraginaceae

AUTHORITY

Myosotis traversii var. *cinerascens* (Petrie) L.B.Moore

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Extinct

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Extinct

2009 | Extinct

2004 | Extinct

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island, Canterbury, Castle Hill Basin only.

HABITAT

A limestone endemic restricted to the Castle Hill Basin. Herbarium details provide few clues as to its habitat, but it is generally assumed from the few notes available that it was found growing on exposed limestone cliff faces, crevices and possibly in associated talus.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tufted, greyish green, hairy, rosette forming herb. Rosette leaves numerous, spatulate, 20-70 x 40-90 mm, petiole broad, ill-defined, hairs numerous, on upper surface smoothly appressed, overlapping of varying lengths, hairs on undersides short, not retrorse. Lateral branches ascending to erect, up to 150 mm long, internodes < leaves. Upper stem leaves 12-20 mm, oblong, narrowing to subacute tip; hairs of upper surface appressed, short, those of undersides similar but shorter, interspersed with longer hooked hairs. Inflorescence a compact, many-flowered cyme, carried 10-20(-30) mm above leaves when fruiting, occasionally with a leafy bract above the lowest division. Flowers probably white or maybe pale lemon.

SIMILAR TAXA

The most recent treatment of New Zealand *Myosotis*, that offered by Moore (in Allan 1961, Flora of New Zealand, Vol. 1, p. 817-818) places this plant within *M. traversii* Hook.f., as one of two distinct varieties. From the type variety it, and var. *cantabrica* L.B.Moore are distinguished by the presence of many hooked hairs on the undersurface of the upper stem leaves. From var. *cantabrica* it is distinguished by the short, smoothly appressed leaf hairs and elongated fruiting inflorescence.

FLOWERING

Unknown



FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

FRUITING

February

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Unknown. As a relatively low-elevation plant of limestone outcrops it may have been reasonably easy to cultivate from rooted pieces and fresh seed.

THREATS

Unknown. This plant is known from only a handful of collections made during the last 1800s and early 1900s. It has not been confirmed from the wild since that time. Possibly, as is usual in New Zealand members of this genus, it occupied a very localised, specific habitat, from which it was eliminated by a combination of over-collection and habitat modification through weed invasion.

ETYMOLOGY

myosotis: Mouse-eared

traversii: Named after William Thomas Locke Travers (1819-1903) who was an Irish lawyer, magistrate, politician, explorer, naturalist, photographer. He lived in New Zealand from 1849 and was a fellow of the Linnean Society.

cinerascens: Becoming ash-coloured

Where To Buy

Extinct.

Cultural Use/Importance

The plant has not been specifically searched for at its only known habitat. However, the Castle Hill area is popular with botanists and there have been several unsuccessful ad hoc surveys. One problem is that *M. traversii* var. *cantabrica* L.B.Moore occurs in the the same general area, and it is not easy to separate it from var. *cinerascens*. Opinion is currently divided as to whether var. *cinerascens* is a valid species or variety. Some botanists believe the few herbarium specimens are evidence that this plant is actually an uncommon hybrid between *M. traversii* var. *cantabrica* and another one of the three or four other *Myosotis* species which occur in the general area. On advice from Dr B.P.J. Molloy (pers. comm.), NZPCN retains *M. traversii* var. *cinerascens*, although not at the species rank this botanist advocates. New Zealand *Myosotis* are badly in need of a full taxonomic treatment using modern techniques.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared by NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (1 February 2008). Description 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-traversii-var-cinerascens/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/myosotis-traversii-var-cinerascens/>