

Rachelia glaria

SYNONYMS

None (described in 1997)

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Rachelia glaria J.M.Ward et Breitw.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

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

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

2009 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

2004 | Range Restricted

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (eastern Marlborough on the ranges at the head waters of the Awatere River and at Mt Terako, northern Canterbury).

HABITAT

Alpine. A species of dry, shingly, non-glaciated mountains, where it appears to be confined to fine argillite lenses within mobile scree.



Mt Barefell. Photographer: Gillian M. Crowcroft, Licence: All rights reserved.



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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tufted, silver-grey perennial herb with widely spaced groups of 1–10 upright shoots, 10–30 × 10 mm in diameter, produced from long, slender, branched rhizomes. **Aerial stems** sparingly and shortly branched or sometimes unbranched, entirely obscured by leaves. **Leaves** imbricate, with leaf base clasping stem and with lamina spreading at an angle of c. 45°, broadly obovate-spathulate, 6.9–9.7 × 4.6–8.5 mm wide, densely lanate all over both surfaces; lamina 4.2–6.5 mm long, widest in upper 1/3, slightly folded along midrib; apex truncate, not mucronate; leaf hairs loosely appressed, ascending, matted, crinkled at free ends; base 2.5–4.4 mm long, widest in upper 1/3, frequently pink-tinged, with 3 strong veins. **Capitula** 2–9 per stem, one terminal and associated with 2 leaves, the others usually sessile in the axils of the upper leaves, rarely terminal on very short axillary shoots with no stem elongation and with 2 small leaves; capitula cluster, including leaves, 15 mm in diameter. **Capitulum** 7.7–9.0 × 1.7–3.0 mm. **Involucral bracts** 14–15, outermost bracts 5–7 × 2.6 mm including margins; innermost bracts narrowly rhombic, 7.1–7.6 × 2.2 mm including margins; lamina 3.3 × 1.0 mm, pale brown near base, bright brown above; apex acute; margins broad, hyaline; stereome 3.8–4.7 mm long, pale green, not fenestrated, vein extending into lamina. **Receptacle** 0.5–1.0 mm in diameter, high and rounded with florets attached to the sides as well as the top. **Florets** 7–11, all of the female and some of the hermaphrodite florets arranged in a ring and surrounding the remaining hermaphrodite florets. **Female florets** 3–5; corolla 4.2 mm long, red below lobes, otherwise translucent pale green; tube 0.15 mm wide, broadening to 0.3 mm at base. **Hermaphrodite florets** 3–6; corolla 4.6 mm long, broadening only slightly above, red below lobes; tube 0.4 mm wide; lobes 0.6 mm long, translucent pale green with a small variable amount of red pigment, not spreading, margins papillose, veins sometimes extending to tip, but variable in a single floret; biseriate capitate hairs on lobes and a few on upper part of tube, a few simple long-tailed hairs on lobes. **Anthers** far exserted from corolla; apical anther appendage flat, tapering; anther tails far exceeding filament collar. **Mature cypsela** 1.5–1.9 × 0.8 mm, ridged, reddish or brown; papillate. **Pappus hairs** 5.3–5.6 mm long; shaft 40–55 µm wide.

SIMILAR TAXA

Recognised by its distinctive inflorescence with the capitula in a dense cluster at the end of the stem and each subtended by a leaf. Similar to *Haastia sinclairii* Hook.f. from which it is distinguished by its truncate leaves and smaller shoot and leaf size, and from *Leucogenes grandiceps* (Hook.f.) Beauverd by its short aerial stems and larger leaf size.

FLOWERING

December to January

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Red/Pink

FRUITING

February to March

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Extremely difficult to grow and it should not be removed from the wild.

THREATS

A naturally uncommon plant of fine, mobile, scree where it is restricted is narrow lenses of argillite. *Rachelia* is especially vulnerable to trampling and some accessible populations have been damaged by plant collectors. In recent years at least one well known population as died out for reasons that are as yet unclear. *Rachelia* may be more threatened than has previously been believed.

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

ATTRIBUTION

Description modified from Ward et al. (1997).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Ward JM, Breitwieser I, Lovis JD. 1997. *Rachelia glaria* (Compositae), a new genus and species from the South Island of New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 35(2): 145–154.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.1997.10414150>.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/rachelia-glaria/>