

Scutellaria novae-zelandiae

COMMON NAME

New Zealand skullcap, shovel mint

SYNONYMS

Scutellaria humilis Hook.f. non R.Br.

FAMILY

Lamiaceae

AUTHORITY

Scutellaria novae-zelandiae Hook.f.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 60

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: DP, RR

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: EF, RR

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: EF, RR

2004 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable

DISTRIBUTION

Northern South Island, particularly in the west.

HABITAT

Free draining, alluvial matai (*Prumnopitys taxifolia* (Sol. ex D.Don) de Laub.), black beech (*Nothofagus solandri* (Hook.f. Oerst.), and totara (*Podocarpus totara* (G.Benn.) ex D.Don var. *totara*) forest.



Foliage and flowers. Photographer: Barbara Mitcalfe, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Close up of flowers. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Small, creeping, perennial herb forming diffuse patches on forest floor. All parts puberulent to glabrate. Main stems woody at base, creeping, square in cross-section, dark purple-red, maroon to almost black. Branches sparse to many, spreading, sub-erect to erect. Leaves in distant pairs. Petioles 2-20 mm long, slender, dark purple to purple-black. Lamina 3-13 x 2-16 mm, dark green above, pink to purple underneath, ovate, suborbicular to reniform, membranous, entire or 3-5-toothed or lobed, apex obtuse to rounded, base rounded to subcordate or cordate; lamina surface usually glabrate with hairs restricted to veins on leaf undersides, sometimes entirely glabrous; undersides finely dotted with small spherical glands. Flowers single in leaf axils, white. Pedicels 1-3 mm long, < petioles. Bracts subulate. Calyx 2.5-3.5 mm long, puberulent; scale enlarging until at least 1.5 mm long at anthesis. Corolla 6-11 mm long to apex of lower lip, hairy; tube 4-6 mm long, straight, broadening toward apex; lower lip > upper lip, middle lobe broad, rounded, upper lip deeply lobed and rounded. Nutlets 1-1.3 mm long, dark brown, surface granular.

SIMILAR TAXA

A distinctive species. The white helmet-shaped flowers and small shovel-shaped seeds readily distinguish it from all other indigenous herbaceous plants. It could be confused with the naturalised *S. minor* Hudson, but that species has linear to lanceolate, entire mid to upper stem leaves (rather than broad-ovate, suborbicular to reniform, lobed to toothed leaves), and pink rather than white flowers.

FLOWERING

August to March (but sporadic flowering may occur throughout the year)

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

August to March (but sporadic fruiting may occur throughout the year)

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from cuttings, divisions of whole plants and seed. An excellent ground cover for semi-shaded free-draining to permanently damp, fertile soils.

THREATS

Threatened mainly from weeds, which overshadow plants, smother and outcompete them. Some populations have been browsed by goats and cattle.

ETYMOLOGY

novae-zelandiae: Of New Zealand

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 November 2009. Description adapted from Webb et al. (1988) and 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. Christchurch, Canterbury University Press. 471 pp.

Webb, C.J.; Sykes, W.R.; Garnock-Jones, P.J. 1988: *Flora of New Zealand. Vol. IV. Naturalised Pteridophytes, Gymnosperms, Dicotyledons*. Christchurch, New Zealand, Botany Division, D.S.I.R.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/scutellaria-novae-zelandiae/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/scutellaria-novae-zelandiae/>