

Olearia gardneri

GARDNER'S TREE DAISY

Olearia gardneri is one of eight rare *Olearia* species included in the Small-leaved Tree Daisy National Recovery Plan. A separate fact sheet is available for each species. The aim of the factsheets is to encourage public awareness of these unique New Zealand species and to find compatible ways of managing the places where they exist. A first step towards this is to help people recognise the plants and take an interest in their welfare.

Description

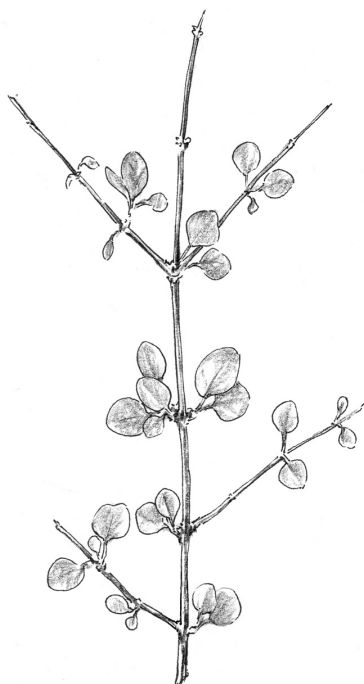
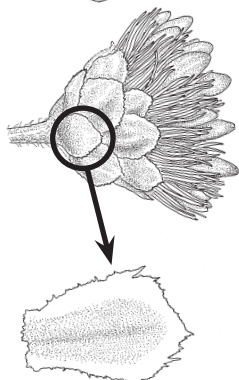
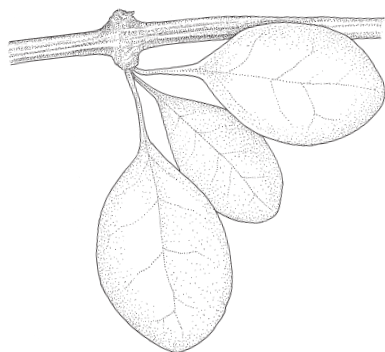
Olearia gardneri was described and named in 1998. It is a deciduous shrub or small tree up to 7 m tall, with furrowed, fawn bark on the trunk and older branches. Young branches and branchlets show two distinct ridges in cross-section, and have dark reddish brown, smooth bark. Leaves are borne in clusters of usually opposite pairs that are light green, thin, hairless or nearly so, elliptic in shape and average 10mm long x 7 mm wide. Flowers occur in clusters of one to six, any time from October to December, and occur at the same time or after the appearance of the new leaves.

References to *Olearia hectorii* from the North Island prior to 1998 are now known to be *Olearia gardneri*.

Habitat

Olearia gardneri prefers higher-fertility old slips, flood-prone and often wet damp valley floors, and the toe-slopes of hill country. It also appears to favour light

gaps or margins of alluvial forest. In a relictual state it is often the last component remaining in depleted forest and scrub. It supports at least nine moth species, of which five are tree daisy specialists.



Sketches not to scale





Similar Plants

The architecture of the plant is similar to young plants of *Olearia virgata*.

Distribution

Olearia gardneri is endemic to the North Island. It has a disjunct distribution, occurring in the Rangitikei region (Taihape-Mataroa district), and in the eastern Wairarapa hill country. Historically it had a wider distribution, being known from inland Hawke's Bay, but is now thought to be extinct there.

Population Size

A total of about 110 adult plants are known, with most from the Rangitikei region of Wanganui Conservancy. The stronghold for the species is in the Hautapu and Turakina Valleys, near Mataroa, where plants occur at seven locations. In the Wairarapa, 20 plants are known from seven locations. Only 48 seedlings and saplings less than 1m tall are known, all from the Rangitikei region.



Photos by Mike Thorsen.
Sketches by Rebecca
Wagstaff and Lloyd Esler.

National Threat status and Threats

Nationally Critical. Threats include habitat loss, lack of legal protection for existing sites, animal browsing, weed invasion, lack of seedling recruitment and lack of a functioning ecosystem.



How Can I help?

Learn to recognise the plant.

Tell staff at the Department of Conservation if you discover populations of the plant or suspect you have.

Explore ways to protect populations of the plant through covenanting, fencing weed control and supplementary planting.

Use locally sourced plants in gardens, shelterbelts and revegetation projects.

Further Information

For more information visit the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network web site: www.nzpcn.org.nz

DOC Contacts

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