

# Biodiversity



Number 32

## Kirk's daisy / Kohurangi (*Brachyglottis kirkii* var. *kirkii*)

### DESCRIPTION

Kirk's daisy is a small shrub typically found growing as an epiphyte in the canopy of large emergent native trees. It has soft, fleshy leaves, pale to dark green coloured, sometimes with a hint of purple. The leaves are usually toothed towards the tip, and are alternately arranged. It grows as an erect shrub to about two metres high, with purple stems and grey coloured bark. The white daisy flowers are about 5cm in diameter and occur in spring in large terminal clusters. The seeds are wind-dispersed with dandelion-like structures. It is a member of the daisy family (Asteraceae).

### DISTRIBUTION

Kirk's daisy is indigenous to New Zealand and is found throughout the North Island in lowland to sub-montane forests. It is a species that is found in old-growth forest, perched in nest epiphytes such as *Astellia solandri* and *Collosporum* sp. in the canopy of large established trees. It is occasionally found growing terrestrially on riverbanks and on the ground in kauri (*Agathis australis*) forests where there is effective pest control established.

### KIRK'S DAISY IN TARANAKI

Kirk's daisy has been recorded in many locations around Taranaki, with many sightings on Mt Taranaki, also at Pukeiti and on the Kaitake Ranges. There are a number of populations within the New Plymouth urban boundaries in protected areas of old forest. It has also been sighted at Parininihi/ Whitecliffs and Mt Messenger, and eastern Taranaki inland from Inglewood and Eltham, again in areas of protected remnant forest. October / November is a good time to go looking for Kirk's daisy, as it is more easily spotted in the tree canopies when it is in flower and providing a lovely spring display. It may in fact be more common than we realise – we just need to keep looking for it.



### WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP

- Control possums, wild goats, pigs and deer in forested areas.
- Report sightings of Kirk's daisy to Taranaki Regional Council Environment Services.
- Take care not to remove Kirk's daisy plants or their host trees or habitats during vegetation clearance/trimming operations.



### CONSERVATION

- Kirk's daisy is a native New Zealand species that is listed as 'at risk'. It is in decline and is threatened in its normal habitat.

### THREATS

- Browsing by possums, goats, pigs and deer.
- Forest clearance/

### QUICK FACTS

- Kirk's daisy is very distinctive. However, because it is usually epiphytic and well out of reach, plants could be confused with the epiphytic *Pittosporum kirkii* and *P. cornifolium*. These pittosporums have a more open branching habit, leathery leaves, and non-daisy like flowers.



Kirk's daisy in flower.



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