

Native plants of subalpine areas of Canterbury



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The subalpine region is dominated by various species of snow tussock, occupying a range of environmental conditions. The broad-leaved snow tussock (*Chionochloa flavescens*) and red tussock/hau mata (*Chionochloa rubra*) prefer wetter sites, whereas the narrow-leaved snow tussock/wī kura (*Chionochloa rigida*) and the slim-leaved snow tussock (*Chionochloa macra*) prefer drier sites.

Shrub species are also common in the subalpine environment and form extensive communities, commonly referred to as a subalpine shrub zone. Snow tōtara (*Podocarpus nivalis*), mountain toatoa (*Phyllocladus alpinus*), porcupine shrub (*Melicytus alpinus*), species of turpentine shrubs (*Dracophyllum*), hebe/koromiko, and coprosma/karamū are common throughout this area.

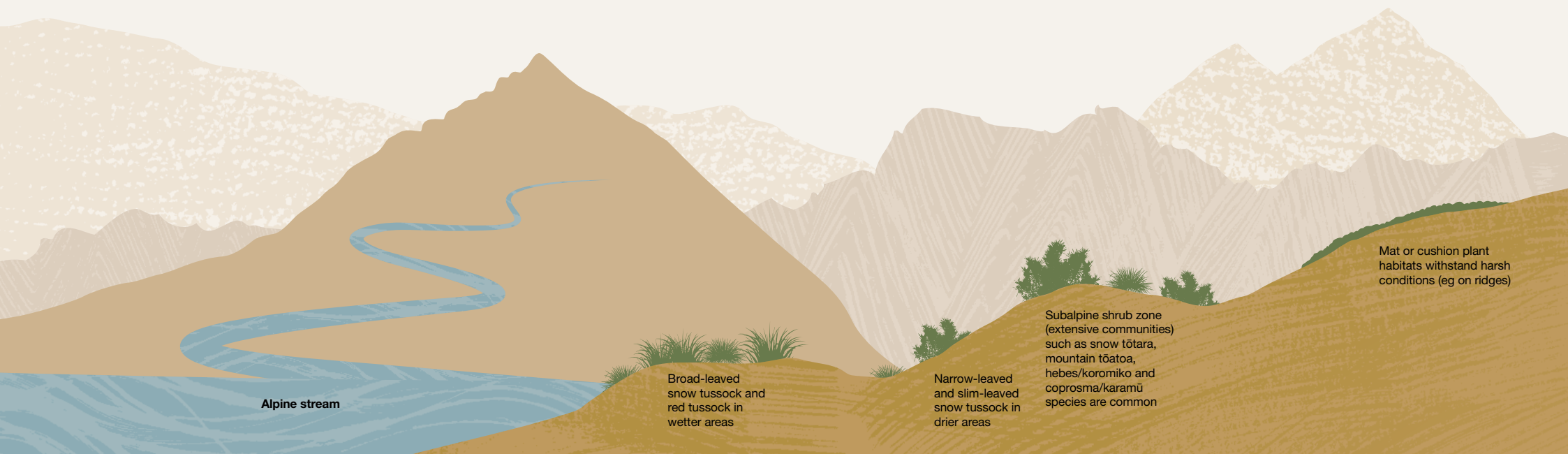
An important part of the subalpine flora is a wide diversity of herbaceous plant species. Common species include the mountain daisies (celmisia/tikumū), speargrass/taramea (*Aciphylla*), small tussocks and grasses – such as mountain fescue (*Festuca matthewsii*) and carpet grass (*Chionochloa australis*), gentians and mountain buttercups/kawariki (*Ranunculus*). Mats, or cushion plants, evolved to withstand harsh conditions, are also a feature of subalpine flora. Vegetable sheep, such as *Raoulia exima*, are an excellent example of the cushion plant habit.

Two threatened species found growing in the subalpine zone in Canterbury are *Pittosporum patulum* and *Hebe cupressoides*.

T = threatened

Acaena caesiiglauca
Acaena inermis
Aciphylla aurea, taramea, golden spaniard
Aciphylla montana
Aciphylla scott-thomsonii
Aciphylla subflabellata
Aristotelia fruticosa, mountain wineberry
Brachyglottis bellidioides
Brachyglottis bennetii
Brachyglottis cassinioides
Carmichaelia grandiflora
Carmichaelia petriei, desert broom
Carmichaelia uniflora
Celmisia semicordata, false spaniard
Chionochloa conspicua, hunangāmoho
Chionochloa flavescens, broad-leaved snow tussock
Chionochloa rigida, wī kura, narrow-leaved snow tussock
Chionochloa rubra, haumata, red tussock
Coprosma atropurpurea
Coprosma ciliata
Coprosma dumosa
Coprosma propinqua, mingimingi
Coprosma rugosa
Carmichaelia crassicaulis
Coriaria angustissima

Coriaria sarmentosa
Corokia cotoneaster, korokio, corokia
Craspedia uniflora, woollyhead
Discaria toumatu, matagouri, tūmatakuru
Festuca matthewsii, alpine fescue tussock
Festuca novae-zelandiae, fescue tussock
Hebe buchannii
Hebe cupressoides (T)
Hebe haastii
Hebe macrantha
Hebe odora
Hebe pinguifolia
Hebe subalpina
Melicytus alpinus, porcupine shrub
Muehlenbeckia axillaris, creeping pohuehue
Olearia cymbifolia, shrub daisy
Olearia fimbriata
Olearia virgata
Ozothamnus leptophyllus, tauhinu, golden cottonwood
Phyllocladus alpinus, mountain toatoa
Pimelea prostrata
Pittosporum patulum (T)
Poa colensoi, blue tussock
Poa macra
Ranunculus lyallii
Sophora microphylla, kōwhai
Sophora prostrata, dwarf kōwhai



Alpine stream

Broad-leaved snow tussock and red tussock in wetter areas

Narrow-leaved and slim-leaved snow tussock in drier areas

Subalpine shrub zone (extensive communities) such as snow tōtara, mountain tōatoa, hebes/koromiko and coprosma/karamū species are common

Mat or cushion plant habitats withstand harsh conditions (eg on ridges)