

THE STATUS OF *MAZUS PUMILO* IN CANTERBURY

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On the 28th September 1988, accompanied by John and Phyllis Thompson, we visited Leithfield Beech to see how the delightful little perennial herb *Mazus pumilo* R.Br. had fared since John had first noted its occurrence in a paddock nearly eight years earlier on 20th February 1980 (Thompson 1980). On that occasion some plants were in flower. Two weeks later more patches of larger extent were seen.

John's excellent memory led us near the spot, where we quartered the ground, searching carefully. It was Phyllis who called out, "Could this be it?", and indeed it was - the object of our search. A roughly circular patch perhaps 90 cm across was showing just above the short turf, in a shallow sandy depression. Some of the plants appeared to be affected by drought. Under normal climatic conditions this sandy area would have been moist. Careful searching failed to reveal any further plants.

This is now perhaps the only site on the plains close to Christchurch where this plant is found, as the colonies at Chaney Forest (Thompson 1980) have been destroyed. In the years since 1980 the patches at Leithfield beech have receded and the plants continued existence in the area is tenuous.

I have a small patch of *Mazus pumilo* in my garden. A clump was given to me by Ian Tweedy and I shall be keeping a close eye on them. They have not yet flowered.

Mazus pumilo is described by Allan (1961) as rhizomatous, emitting short leafy branches, more or less prostrate. Its distribution is given as lowland to lower montane, swamp margins, boggy ground, damp grassland from near Cape Maria van Diemen to Canterbury Plains. It also occurs in Tasmania (whence type) and Australia. *M. pumilo* is not listed by Given (1981) in the checklist of plants at risk in New Zealand. However, *M. pumilo* has a restricted distribution in Canterbury, only having been recorded from north Canterbury between the Hurunui and Waimakariri Rivers (Canterbury Botanical Society 1983).

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(A healthy patch of *Mazus pumilo* can be found in the Cockayne Memorial Garden, Christchurch Botanical Gardens, where the more common *Mazus radicans* also grows. - editor)

References

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- Thompson, J. 1980. *Mazus pumilo* R.Br. *Canterbury Botanical Society Journal* 14, 39-40.



Nothofagus menziesii and *tomitii*