

Pachystegia insignis (Marlborough Rock Daisy)

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If you want a plant for that difficult dry sunny area under the house eaves, *Pachystegia insignis*, the Marlborough rock daisy, is ideal.

Apart from an initial watering, they reward neglect with a year round display of striking, leathery, green foliage and large, yellow-centred white flowers in summer that are arguably some of the best in our native flora.

A small genus of just three species (the other two being *P. minor* and *P. rufa*) *Pachystegia* is a member of the Asteraceae or daisy family.

It is endemic (found only here) to New Zealand, growing in exposed dry conditions on rocky outcrops and cliff crevices of coastal and inland Kaikoura and North Canterbury.

Pachystegia comes from Greek, and refers to the felt-like matted hair or tomentum (a mechanism which helps conserve water) on the leaves and stems. *Insignis* is Latin meaning striking or distinguished. They are certainly this, especially in spring when they produce stout, felty, drumstick-like flower buds that stand tall above the foliage.

A low-growing spreading shrub between 30cm to 90cm tall Marlborough rock daisy are great for the home garden in those more exposed, dry areas with good drainage or as a pot plant on the patio. While they do best in full sun they will tolerate some shade but this encourages a more open habit and larger leaves.

A bonus is they are a reasonably long lasting shrub with some plants known to have lived for 30 years or more.

Marlborough rock daisy can be found growing at Otari-Wilton's Bush in the rock garden and form border.