

Vegetable sheep, a woolly wonder of nature!

A unique cushion plant covered with woolly leaves resembles a white sheep grazing on mountain slopes.

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NATIVE to the rugged terrains of New Zealand, where the wind whips through the grasslands and rocky formations, an intriguing creature resides — the vegetable sheep. Despite its name, it is not an animal, but yes! It is a unique plant, resembling a flock of fluffy sheep grazing peacefully in the mountains.

Vegetable sheep, scientifically known as *Raoulia eximia* belongs to the Asteraceae family. Its appearance is notably remarkable, resembling a sheep with dense, woolly foliage growing in compact, rounded clusters in close proximity to

the ground. The leaves of the plant are small, scale-like, and densely packed, giving a catchy, soft and fuzzy texture just like sheep's wool. Beneath them are the remains of old, decayed leaves, developing a thick layer akin to a peat that holds water like a sponge.

These plants are well-suited to their rugged mountain homes, thriving in barren, rocky terrain with less soil, surpassing other struggling plants. Their dense, cushion-like shape helps them retain water and endure harsh winds and weather. Besides, their fluffy leaves keep them warm