

Corunastylis pumila

COMMON NAME

yellow gumland leek orchid

SYNONYMS

Prasophyllum pumilum Hook.f.; Genoplesium pumilum (Hook.f.) D.L.Jones & M.A.Clem.

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Corunastylis pumila (Hook.f.) D.L. Jones et M.A. Clem.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

NVS CODE

CORPML

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 44

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: EF, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: EF

2004 | Sparse

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (from Te Pahi south to about Kawhia, East Cape and the Bay of Plenty), Chatham Island.

HABITAT

A species which requires open, sparsely vegetated, usually relatively unfertile habitats. Most recent gatherings come from gumland scrub, particularly in sites which have been burned frequently. It is also abundant in those sites kept open through substrate infertility, the frequency of natural disturbances caused by for example geothermal activity, or along habitats which are artificially maintained such as track and roadsides. It is very common on Great Barrier Island (its probable stronghold) where it flourishes on the skeletal soils and bare rhyolitic rock left after extensive kauri (*Agathis australis* (D.Don) Lindl.) logging and repeated burning.



Koparukaitai (June). Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Koparukaitai. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth

FEATURES

Yellow green, reed-like orchid of open clay pans, gumland scrub and dry cliff and roadside clay banks, up to 450 mm tall. Base of plant clad in persistent, brown, somewhat fibrous sheaths of old scale-leaves; these enclosing current tuber and remnant tubers of past seasons growth. Stem 1-2 mm diameter, yellow-green, erect, very rush/reed-like, leafless almost to inflorescence. Leaf solitary, much < raceme, at first broadly involute, tapering, about equal to inflorescence in length, only rarely overtopping it. Inflorescence a raceme of 3-30 closely-spaced flowers. Perianth pale, greenish to greenish-yellow, opening into a short wide bell bent on the ovary so as to face downwards. Dorsal sepal 3 mm long, concave, broadly ovate, acuminate; laterals slightly longer, very shortly connate at base, more or less gibbous, spreading widely above, broad-elliptic, shortly mucronate. Petals shorter, membranous, with longer hair-tip. Labellum about equally long, articulate by a curved claw to the long column-foot; limb broadly oblong, upper surface grooved and more or less covered by 2 longitudinal papillose calli; margin not ciliate. Lateral processes of column about as long as anthers; apices broad and irregularly laciniate, the anterior margin minutely papillose. Anther subsessile, overtopping rostellum, apiculate. Stigma set above column base, of equal or slightly longer length.

SIMILAR TAXA

Superficially similar to *C. nuda* (Hook.f.) D.L. Jones et M.A. Clem. from which it differs by its yellow-green to green (rather than red-green to dark green) stem and leaf; longer leaf, drooping rather than horizontal, open, almost campanulate, pale yellow rather than reddish flowers, and greenish rather than red labellum lacking ciliate margins.

FLOWERING

February - October

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Yellow

FRUITING

March - December

LIFE CYCLE

Minute seeds are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult - should not be removed from the wild.

THREATS

Corunastylis pumila has a current distribution that is typical of sparse taxa. However, this is unlikely to be completely natural. Much of this species current distribution is undoubtedly human induced and it cannot be denied that this species has undergone a massive range reduction over the last 100 or so years, as the open clay pans and gumland scrub it flourishes in have been reduced to tiny, effectively non-functional units now given over to natural succession to taller vegetation. On consideration of available evidence this species is still declining but perhaps less than it was in the recent past. Nevertheless, *C. pumila* probably does not warrant Sparse status and it may require a higher listing to more accurately reflect its now greatly reduced range.

ETYMOLOGY

pumila: Small

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Moore, L.B.; Edgar, E. 1970: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. II. Government Printer, Wellington.

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics 11: 285-309

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/corunastylis-pumila/>