

Corybas acuminatus

COMMON NAME

spider orchid

SYNONYMS

Corysanthes acuminata (M.A.Clem. et Hatch) Szlach.; *Nematoceras acuminatum* (M.A.Clem. et Hatch) Molloy, D.L.Jones et M.A.Clem.

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Corybas acuminatus M.A.Clements et Hatch

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

NVS CODE

NEMACU

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 36

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North, South, Stewart, Chatham and Auckland Islands

HABITAT

Lowland to subalpine in damp, usually shaded sites. Preferring tall indigenous forest but also found under dense scrub and around tarns and mires



Plant in flower, Coromandel. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Nematoceras acuminatum, Te Kauri Scenic Reserve, September 1985,. Photographer: Peter de Lange

FEATURES

Mainly solitary, terrestrial, tuberous, glabrous, winter to summer-green herb. Plant at flowering up to 60 mm tall. Leaf sessile, up to 40 x 20 mm, ovate-acuminate to deltoid, repand, cordate at the base, margins usually undulating; light green above with conspicuous reddish veining, silvery beneath. Leaves of young plants reniform or broadly cordate, rarely pandurate, apiculate, without reddish veining. Floral bract shortly caudate, secondary bract subulate. Flower usually solitary, sessile, more or less translucent, with dull red stripes. Dorsal sepal up to 40 mm long, extending as horizontal, filiform caudae. Lateral sepals filiform, erect and very long, tapering, exceeding the flower by as much as 60 mm. Petals similar, smaller, horizontal or deflexed. Labellum bearing two rounded auricles near base; lamina expanded, abruptly deflexed, mucronate, the margins irregularly fimbriate to entire. Column very short with large basal callus; column-wings minutely denticulate and exceeding the anther; stigma orbicular, pollinia 4, massulate. Seeding peduncle up to 180 tall.

SIMILAR TAXA

Easily recognised by the green, sessile, triangular, sharply acute leaf with undulating margins and reddish veins, and by the very long dorsal and lateral sepals, and very pale translucent greenish-white, purple flecked flower.

FLOWERING

August - December

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Red/Pink

FRUITING

October - April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult - should not be removed from the wild. Can be grown in basic orchid mix consists of 2 parts medium coarse sand, ideally clean river sand; 2 parts soil, humus or leaf-mould; 1 part weathered sawdust or rotting wood; 1 part granulated bark. Many *Corybas* thrive when more leaf-mould is added, and the plants grown in 50-70% shade, in the cooler, darker end of the shade-house, in pots kept moist throughout the growing period.

ETYMOLOGY

corybas: Helmet flower

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Considerable research is underway to investigate the validity of the segregate genera split from *Corybas* R.Br. by Jones et al. (2002). Whilst much of that work has yet to be published, on advice from Australian Orchidologists Peter Weston and Stephen Hopper (*pers. comm.*, July 2011, November 2014), all of the segregate genera recognised for New Zealand by Jones et al. (2002) are returned to *Corybas*.

Recently Lehnebach (2016) has made three combinations for those *Nematoceras* lacking valid names in *Corybas*. This action now enables the full transfer of *Nematoceras* back to *Corybas*. However, as of writing, a formal publication rejecting the segregation of *Corybas* by Jones et al. (2002) has yet to be published. Lehnebach cites an unpublished PhD (Lyon 2014) that indicates this move is imminent.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2007. Description based on: Clements (1985). This was the species treated as *C. rivularis* (*Nematoceras rivulare* (A.Cunn.) Hook.f.) by Moore in Moore & Edgar (1970).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

- Clements, M.A.; Hatch, E.D. 1985: *Corybas acuminatus* (Orchidaceae) - a new name for the species previously considered to be *Corybas rivularis*. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 23: 491-494.
- Jones, D.L.; Clements, M.A.; Sharma, I.K.; Mackenzie, A.M.; Molloy, B.P.J. 2002: Nomenclatural notes arising from studies into the Tribe *Diurideae* (Orchidaceae). *The Orchadian* 13: 437-468.
- Lehnebach, C. 2016: New combinations and a replacement name for three New Zealand spider orchids (*Corybas*). *The New Zealand Native Orchid Journal* 139. 4-5.
- Lyon, S. P. 2014: Molecular systematics, biogeography, and mycorrhizal associations in the Acianthinae (Orchidaceae), with a focus on the genus *Corybas*. PhD Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison. USA.
- Moore, L.B.; Edgar, E. 1970: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. II. Government Printer, Wellington.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/corybas-acuminatus/>