

Corybas confusus

COMMON NAMES

spider orchid

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Terrestrial, seasonal orchid. Leaves solitary heart-shaped or broadly ovate, distinctly mucronate. Flowers solitary, dark maroon.

FLOWER COLOURS

Purple, Red/Pink

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Terrestrial herbs, 12–30 mm tall at flowering. **Leaf** distinctly petiolate, petiole 2.8–31.4 mm long; lamina cordiform to widely ovate, 9.7–19.0 × 10.8–21.3 mm; margin entire; apex mucronate with mucro 0.1–2.2 mm long. **Flower** solitary, held erect on a peduncle 0.6–7.8 mm long; **floral bract** triangular to widely deltoid when flattened, 1.0–6.6 × 1.3–3.0 mm; **dorsal sepal** dark or light green, with red-maroon streaks and blotches towards the apex, arching over the labellum, concave to cucullate, narrow at the base and spatulate towards the tip, apex obtuse or slightly retuse; **lateral sepals** linear-filiform, whitish or red to maroon, 13.1–46.1 mm long; **petals** similar to the lateral sepals but longer, 27–75 mm long; **labellum** dark red to maroon with a pale green to yellowish centre, auriculate at base, aperture 0.8–3.0 mm in diameter; lamina deflexed, c. 7–10 mm wide, with a central groove formed by an inwards folding of the lamina, extending downwards almost to the lower margin and sunken pit formed at the point where the lamina bends, upper margin incurving, mostly entire but finely erose or laciniate towards the lower margin, apex notched, inner surface covered with small hairs. **Ovary** 3.0–7.6 mm long. **Column** 2.1 mm long, straight, with truncate to emarginate wings at either side of the stigma.

SIMILAR TAXA

Allied to *Corybas trilobus* from which it differs by its widely ovate to cordiform, distinctly mucronate leaf and dark maroon labellum. *Corybas confusus* resembles *C. obscurus* in the dark maroon colour of the labellum but differs from that species by its dark to light green dorsal sepal with obtuse to slightly retuse apex that extends beyond the labellum.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island, South Island, possibly the Chatham Islands (where plants currently referred to *C. aff. sulcatus* approach it).

HABITAT

A species of primarily beech (*Lophozonia* (Nothofagaceae)) forest, montane to subalpine scrub and tussock grassland, in damp mossy areas ranging from 1000–1100 m a.s.l.

THREATS

No Threatened.

GENUS

Corybas

FAMILY

Orchidaceae



AUTHORITY

Corybas confusus Lehnebach

SYNONYMS

None - described in 2016

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October–December

FRUITING

November–January

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult—should not be removed from the wild.

ETYMOLOGY

corybas: Helmet flower

confusus: In reference to the difficult of identification and the confusion caused through general similarity to other plants

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

[Key to native orchids of New Zealand](#)

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Lehnebach CA, Zeller AJ, Frericks J, Ritchie P. 2016. Five new species of *Corybas* (Diurideae, Orchidaceae) endemic to New Zealand and phylogeny of the *Nematoceras* clade. *Phytotaxa* 270(1): 1–24.

<https://doi.org/10.11646/phytotaxa.270.1.1>.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet for NZPCN prepared by P.J. de Lange (13 August 2016). Description from Lehnebach et al. (2016)

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

25 May 2026