

# Corybas hatchii

## COMMON NAMES

spider orchid

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

## FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White



Ohakune Mountain Road. Aug 1996.  
Photographer: Eric Scanlen, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Colonial, terrestrial, tuberous, glabrous, late winter to summer-green herb. Plant at flowering to 60 mm tall. **Tuberoids** globose to ellipsoid on extended roots. **Leaf** solitary, fleshy, shortly petiolate, 5–10 mm long; lamina 15–28 × 11–20 mm long, oval, orbicular, sometimes pandurate, apiculate, rounded to cordate at base; green to yellow green, margins and sometimes whole of upper surface flecked with purple or red, underside silvery, pellucid. **Flower** erect, large for plant, (16)–20–(23) mm long, held well above and back from leaf, mostly translucent white or red, rarely green, usually with much red or purple streaking and flecks, these colourings merging and darkening to maroon toward the back of flower; peduncle short and stout, 2.5–4.2 mm long. **Ovary** 6.2–8.3 mm long, narrowly oblong, yellow-green or cream, ridged, erect or slightly curving back from leaf; subtended by two unequal floral bracts, the smaller projecting toward leaf, 1.3–2.0 mm long or vestigial, linear-subulate, terete, pale green to cream, rarely spotted or flecked with crimson, the larger equal to normally exceeding the ovary, (6.0)–8.8–(11.0) mm long, lanceolate to linear-lanceolate, curved, deeply keeled and closely sheathing ovary for about one third of length, apex acute; green, or yellow-green, rarely flecked or striped with purple or red. **Dorsal sepal** membranous, more or less equal to labellum length 18–24 mm long, translucent white or pale greenish striped and flecked with purple-red or red, lanceolate-acuminate, apex acute, initially erect then arched forwards, and/or very slightly downwards. **Lateral sepals and petals** 25–30–(40) mm long, filiform, forward projecting in an almost parallel alignment, greatly exceeding labellum, translucent to cream, more or less flecked with red, held well above leaf. **Labellum** conspicuous, initially dark maroon, soon grading through to translucent green or cream, with weak to prominent purple-red or red stripes, then flecks or spots, auriculate at base; labellum tube 1.5–2.0 mm long, curving backwards and then abruptly deflexed at c. 90° and expanding into a rapidly broadening lamina; lamina (15)–20–(23) × (6)–10–(20) mm, obtuse when flattened, upper margins more or less folded inwards, upper ¼ more or less overlapping, otherwise widely spreading and flared shallowly grooved; apex usually held well back from leaf; margins initially entire, becoming finely denticulate to more or less erose on either side, and with a short down-curved apiculus; apiculus not touching leaf. **Seeding peduncle** up to 180 mm tall. **Capsule** narrowly ovoid up to 15 mm long.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Part of the *Corybas rivularis* complex from, which it is distinguished by its generally translucent or red flower, and very long, forward projecting lateral sepals and petals which are more or less aligned in parallel. The petals are also more or less as long as the lateral sepals. It is perhaps closest to *C. papa* from which it differs by the shortly petiolate rather than sessile leaf; usually translucent to red flowers (very occasionally greenish), rather than mostly green; forward projecting rather than widely spreading lateral sepals and petals; preference for higher elevation habitats; and also by its usually later (up to 8 weeks later) flowering time.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island, South Island. Mainly in the west.

## HABITAT

Lowland to subalpine (up to 1200 m a.s.l.). Favouring damp, well-lighted to shady seepages that have developed over base-rich substrates such as calcaerous mudstones, siltstones, limestones, basalt, basaltic andesites, and andesitic tephra.

## GENUS

Corybas

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Corybas hatchii Lehnebach

SYNONYMS

Corybas macranthus var. longipetalus Hatch, Corybas longipetalus Hatch nom. inval., nom. illeg.; Nematoceras longipetalum (Hatch) Molloy, D.L.Jones et M.A.Clem.

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*. Lehnebach (2016) 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.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

July–November

FRUITING

October–January

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult—should not be removed from the wild.

ETYMOLOGY

**corybas**: Helmet flower

**hatchii**: After Hatch

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

NVS CODE

CORHAT

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened [Help](#)

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the [“Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025”](#) Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

- Jones DL, Clements MA, Sharma IK, Mackenzie AM, Molloy BPJ. 2002. Nomenclatural notes arising from studies into the Tribe *Diurideae* (Orchidaceae). *The Orchadian* 13(10): 437–468.  
<https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/310769#page/2/mode/1up>.
- 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 SP. 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.  
<https://asset.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/UAXO3VHO6P7EH8Y/R/file-19145.pdf>.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2007. Description based on herbarium and fresh plant material.

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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## MORE INFORMATION

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

## PDF DATE

27 May 2026