

Corybas oblongus

COMMON NAME

spider orchid

SYNONYMS

Corysanthes oblonga (Hook.f.) Hook.f., *Nematoceras oblongum* Hook.f.
Singularybas oblongus (Hook.f.) Molloy, D.L.Jones et M.A.Clem.

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Corybas oblongus (Hook.f.) Rchb.f.,

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

NVS CODE

SINOBL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = c.34, 34$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

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

HABITAT

Coastal to subalpine (up to 1200 m a.s.l.). Widespread on consolidated sand within shrubland and sand dune forests, in shrubland, tall forest, lowland peat bogs and subalpine mires and in cloud forest. Often found on mossy banks within dense forest, or on the margins of slow flowing forest streams.



Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe

FEATURES

Terrestrial, tuberous, winter-spring flowering, glabrous perennial herb. Plant at flowering 20-30 mm tall, usually much taller in fruit. Stem erect, purple-red, maroon or pale whitish. Leaf usually solitary, rarely paired, sessile, rather membranous, 10-40 mm long, upper surface dark green, green with red flecks, or green with red veins, undersides silvery-red or silvery-white, ovate-oblong, apex apiculate, base cordate or rounded, margins undulose or plane, entire. Floral bract prominent, foliaceous, equal in length to ovary, broadly ovate to elliptic, hyaline, pale green or pale yellow, usually flecked with red, purple or maroon. Flowers 1(-2). Dorsal sepal slightly longer than labellum, somewhat fleshy, broadly spathulate, apex broadly obtuse to apiculate, hyaline, whitish flecked with purple or red to greenish-white (rarely completely white) with red flecks; lateral sepals white to slightly off-white or completely beetroot purple, hyaline, very long, filiform. Petals similar to lateral sepals but slightly shorter. Labellum horizontal, or slightly tilted upwards, 5-10 mm long, dark crimson, to crimson-purple (almost black) or rarely completely white, base auriculate, otherwise curved to form a cylinder with a wide flaring, fimbriate mouth (fringed with numerous coarse hyaline teeth); internally with numerous retrorse hair like cilia present from near the mid-line back. Fruit a broadly cylindrical to ovoid-ellipsoid capsule, borne on a peduncle which usually elongates greatly at fruiting

SIMILAR TAXA

None when flowering. The dark crimson coloured frimbriate labellum (with its conspicuous fringe of hyaline teeth) is extremely distinctive. Only *Molloybas cryptanthus* has a similar fimbriate flower but that saprophytic species lacks leaves (and chlorophyll), is rhizomatous, and its flowers are usually hyaline with purple or red flecks or more rarely completely colourless. The sessile usually dark green red flecked or red veined leaves with their usually undulose margins are also rather diagnostic.

FLOWERING

September - February

FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, White

FRUITING

November - April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult - should not be moved from the wild

ETYMOLOGY

corybas: Helmet flower

oblongus: Oblong

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*.

In addition some late-flowering forms growing on sand in the far north, a widespread white-flowered race and, diminutive plants found on the Chatham Islands require further investigation. In the Waikato this species often grows in a heavily reduced state on restiad peat. Plants cultivated from peat bogs retain their small size and seem comparable to Chatham Island plants.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (1 January 2005). Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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.

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-oblongus/>