

Corybas sulcatus

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Data Deficient | Qualifiers: SO?

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

SIMILAR TAXA

Differs from most of the New Zealand *C. trilobus* complex by the dark red flower arising from below the leaf lamina, narrowly obovate-spathulate dorsal sepal, and smaller ovate-orbicular labellum with a denticulate apical margin. However, the relationship of *C. sulcatus* to similar plants on the Chatham, Antipodes, Campbell and Auckland Islands needs critical investigation as they share most of these characters.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic to Macquarie Island. However, plants from the Antipodes Islands, Auckland Islands and Campbell Island/Motu Ihupuku are scarcely any different. Plants on the Chatham Islands also approach it but seem much larger, and these plants are loosely linked to forms found in the South Island.

HABITAT

Confined to the plateau uplands, growing in very wet grassy seepages amongst *Festuca contracta*, *Agrostis magellanica*, *Luzula crinita*, mosses and liverworts.

THREATS

Not Threatened. Listed because it is endemic to Macquarie Island where it is sparsely distributed.

GENUS

Corybas

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Corybas sulcatus (M.A. Clem. et D.L. Jones) G.N. Backh.

SYNONYMS

Nematoceras sulcatum M.A.Clem. et D.L.Jones

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Segregate genera that were split from *Corybas* R.Br. by Jones et al. (2002) were not universally accepted and further research has been carried out into the genus. On advice from Australian Orchidologists Peter Weston and Stephen Hopper (pers. comm., July 2011, November 2014), NZPCN has returned all of the segregate genera recognised for New Zealand by Jones et al. (2002) to *Corybas* (see also Lyon 2014).

Lehnebach (2016) made three combinations for those *Nematoceras* lacking valid names in *Corybas*. This action enabled 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 Lehnebach cites an unpublished PhD (Lyon 2014) that indicates this move is imminent.



Nematoceras aff. *sulcatum*. Chatham Island. Sep 2007. Photographer: Peter B. Heenan, Licence: CC BY-NC.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

November–December

FRUITING

Unknown

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult—should not be removed from the wild. Its only known habitat is a Nature Reserve and World Heritage Site. Macquarie Island is part of Geopolitical Australia.

ETYMOLOGY

corybas: Helmet flower

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Data Deficient | Qualifiers: SO?

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: OL, RR

2004 | Range Restricted

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Data Deficient 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

Backhouse GN. 2010. New combinations in the terrestrial orchid genera *Caladenia* R. Br., *Corybas* Salisb. and *Pterostylis* R. Br. (Orchidaceae) for South-eastern Australia. *Victorian Naturalist* 127(2): 55–57.

Clements MA, Jones DL. 2007. A new species of *Nematoceras* and characterisation of *N. dienemum* (Orchidaceae), both from subantarctic Macquarie Island. *Telopea* 11(4): 406–408.

Jones DL, Clements MA, Sharma IK, Mackenzie AM, Molloy BPJ. 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 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 (31 August 2006).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

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

