

Corybas vitreus

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, distinctly mucronate. Flowers solitary, central portion mostly translucent ('glass-like').

FLOWER COLOURS

Green

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Terrestrial herbs, 14–30 mm tall at flowering. **Leaf** distinctly petiolate, petiole 3.3–24.7 mm long; lamina cordiform, 3.3–14.1 × 7.8–19.6 mm; margin entire; apex mucronate with mucro 0.2–2.8 mm long. **Flower** solitary, held erect on a peduncle 0.7–8.1 mm long; floral bract triangular to widely deltoid when flattened, 1.8–6.8 × 1.3–3.2 mm; **dorsal sepal** pale green and less often with a few maroon streaks, concave to cucullate, arching over the labellum, narrow at the base and widely spatulate towards the tip, apex retuse to emarginated; **lateral sepals** linear-filiform, whitish to pale maroon, 12.0–26.7 mm long; **petals** similar to the lateral sepals but longer, 21.3–56.5 mm long; labellum lamina mostly translucent, less often with a few streaks of maroon, covered with short trichomes, auriculate at base, aperture 1.2–2.6 mm in diameter; **lamina** deflexed, c. 7 mm wide, with a central groove formed by the inwards folding of the lamina, extending downwards half way the labellum and sunken pit formed at the point where the lamina bends; lateral margin of the labellum incurving, entire, with a non-isometric dark maroon to purple band, lower margin translucent, straight and erose. **Ovary** 4.5–8.4 mm long. **Column** 1.8 mm long, straight, round wings flanking the stigma. Senescent flowers with apex of the dorsal sepal pressing against the labellum blocking access to the column.

SIMILAR TAXA

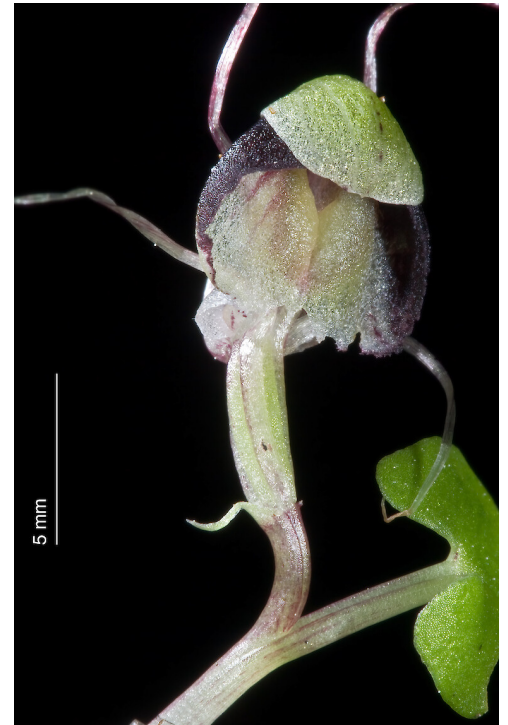
Corybas vitreus is morphologically close to *C. walliae* both having a similar overall pale coloured flower but *C. vitreus* differs from *C. walliae* by its translucent labellum lamina with a non-isometric, dark maroon to purple band along the lateral margin and straight translucent lower margin. *Corybas vitreus* is distinguished from *C. trilobus* by its broadly ovate flower in frontal view and emarginate to retuse dorsal sepal.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (southern), South Island.



Tararua Forest Park. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 18/08/2007, Licence: CC BY.



Aorangi Range. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 09/09/2007, Licence: CC BY.

HABITAT

Locally common in beech forest (*Fuscospora* or *Lophozonia* (Nothofagaceae)) and *Kunzea* / *Leptospermum* shrubland / forest, usually growing in leaf litter at elevations between 600 to 1300 m.

THREATS

Not Threatened.

GENUS

Corybas

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Corybas vitreus Lehnebach

SYNONYMS

None - first described in 2016

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

September–October

FRUITING

November – early January

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult—should not be removed from the wild.

ETYMOLOGY

corybas: Helmet flower

vitreus: Meaning 'of glass or glassy' as in transparent, glass-like and often green tinged

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

[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

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

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

27 May 2026