

Cryptostylis subulata

COMMON NAMES

duck bill orchid, large tongue orchid

BIOSTATUS

Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Non-resident Native – Coloniser | Qualifiers: SO

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stout terrestrial orchid of peat bogs and lake margins. **Leaves** 1–3; petioles 10–190 mm long; lamina 30–180 × 13–40 mm, narrowly elliptic to narrowly oblong-elliptic, light to dark green on both surfaces, apex acute, base cuneiform to tapering. **Flowering stem** 0.25–1 m tall; sheathing bracts 3–5, distant. **Flowers** 5–12, pedicellate; pedicel + ovary 15–20 mm long; sepals and petals yellow-green, stiffly spreading, linear to very narrowly deltoid, margins inrolled; sepals 22 mm long; petals 13 mm long. **Labellum** 20–25 mm long, oblong, red-brown, acute, margins at centre rolled back, often overlapping or meeting, resulting in a constriction at that point within the labellum, concave near anther, elsewhere convex, keeled towards tip by 2 more or less bearded ridges, and 2 finer parallel ones, all four lines terminating in a conspicuous red-brown, 2-lobed, glandular boss near apex.

SIMILAR TAXA

None in New Zealand

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: North Island (swamps north of Kaitaia and Coopers Beach). Also Australia (abundant in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania).

HABITAT

Coastal to lowland peat bogs and associated slowly flowing streams and lakes. Often found growing amongst *Machaerina* Vahl and *Schoenus* L.

THREATS

Plant collectors and wetland destruction remain continual problems within the New Zealand part of its range.

GENUS

Cryptostylis

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Cryptostylis subulata (Labill.) Rchb.f.

SYNONYMS

Malaxis subulata Labill., *Cryptostylis longifolia* R.Br.



Cryptostylis subulata flower at Lake Ohia. Photographer: Bill Campbell, Date taken: 22/10/2007, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Lake Ohia. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 30/10/2008, Licence: CC BY.

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

September–May

FRUITING

November–June

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Minute spores are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Should not be removed from the wild. However, rather easily grown in a peat filled pot kept partially submerged in a tub of water, or in a suitably permanently damp, peaty, sunny spot in the garden.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).

PLANT OF THE MONTH

This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see [Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for August 2024](#) for the full story.

ETYMOLOGY

cryptostylis: From the Greek cryptos (hidden) and stylos (style) which refers to the very short column which is obscured by the basal lobes of the labellum.

subulata: From the Latin subulam ‘awl’, meaning awl-shaped

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

NVS CODE

CRYSUB

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 64

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Non-resident Native – Coloniser | Qualifiers: SO

2012 | Non-resident Native – Coloniser | Qualifiers: SO

2009 | Non-resident Native – Coloniser | Qualifiers: SO

2004 | Non-resident Native – Coloniser

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Moore LB, Edgar E. 1970. Flora of New Zealand, Volume II. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Monocotyledones except Gramineae. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 354 p.

Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics 11*: 285–309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001>.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970).

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/cryptostylis-subulata/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026