# Cyrtostylis oblonga

## COMMON NAMES
winter orchid

## BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Not Threatened
Jump to previous conservation statuses

## CATEGORY
Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS
Orchids

## FLOWER COLOURS
Green, Red/Pink

Leaf and flower bud. Warkworth. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 22/07/2007, Licence: CC BY.

Hunua Range, Wharekawa side. August 2000. Photographer: Eric Scanlen, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Winter to spring flowering perennial herb. Plants at flower up to 100 mm tall (usually less), elongating in seed. **Stem** erect, slender. **Leaf** sessile, almost basal, 10–40 × 8–17 mm, yellow-green to green, oblong, obtuse to subacute, base cordate to rounded. **Inflorescence** a raceme up to 30 mm long; floral bracts diminutive, membranous. **Flowers** 1–4; perianth 8–10 mm long, spreading, pink or pinkish-green. **Sepals** subequal; dorsal sepal narrow linear-lanceolate, obtuse, erect, concave; lateral sepal narrow-linear, acute, projecting forwards or widely spreading. **Petals** similar to lateral sepals. **Labellum** 10 × 4 mm, oblong; apex obtuse, not recurved, projecting horizontally forwards, the adjacent margins toothed; surface more or less plane, lamina bearing two prominent, spheroidal basal calli and two, flat, longitudinal ridges that extend nearly to the apex. **Column** shorter than the labellum, conspicuous; wings narrow below, widening above so that the stigma is flanked by two lobes. **Pollinia** two per anther cell, more or less ellipsoid to tabular, some what crescent-shaped, crumbling readily in single grains.

## SIMILAR TAXA
Most likely to be confused when vegetative with species of spider orchid (*Corybas* from which it is not easily distinguished unless bearing flower buds, which are multiple in a raceme, rather than mostly solitary, rarely in pairs. From *Cyrtostylis rotundifolia* it differs by its yellow-green to green, oblong rather than greyish-green, oblong leaf. Other distinctions are less clear and the status of these two species requires further investigation. *Cyrtostylis oblonga* could be confused with *Acianthus sinclairii* from which it differs by favouring more open habitats and having sessile leaves held close to or at the base of the stem and lying on or very close to the ground, and the labellum is larger, oblong, rather than ovate, and the petals are as long as, or longer than the lateral sepals, rather than much shorter. The very uncommon *Townsonia deflexa* is somewhat similar to both *Cyrtostylis* species but occupies very different forest habitats and it forms interconnected creeping patches. *Townsonia deflexa* has a much smaller, petiolate leaf distinct from the flowering stem which supports a small, orbicular rather than ovate cauline leaf, otherwise *T. deflexa* has flowers that are very similar to those of *Cyrtostylis* and indeed *Acianthus*.

## DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand: Manawatāwhi / Three Kings Islands, North Island (northern parts).

## HABITAT
Coastal to lower montane in open clay pans or lightly shaded scrub. May be found amongst mosses on basalt rock. Most commonly found in shallow leaf litter or hard clay.

## GENUS
Cyrtostylis

## FAMILY
Orchidaceae

## AUTHORITY
Cyrtostylis oblonga Hook.f.

## SYNONYMS
Acianthus oblongus (J.D.Hook.) Schltr., Acianthus reniformis var. oblongus (Hook.f.) Rupp et Hatch;

## TAXONOMIC NOTES
Long regarded as either *Acianthus reniformis* or *Cyrtostylis reniformis*. Based on a mostly unpublished molecular (nrITS based study) and limited chromosomal evidence *Cyrtostylis reniformis* is now regarded as an Australian endemic (B.P.J. Molloy *pers.comm*.). New Zealand plants treated under that name have been referred to *Cyrtostylis oblonga* Hook.f. and *C. rotundifolia* (B.P.J. Molloy pers. comm.), however, Paul Kores (pers. comm.) on the basis of critical multi-marker DNA and morphological based studies of *Acianthus* and it allies treats *Cyrtostylis* as a synonym of *Acianthus*. That work did not examine the taxonomic status of New Zealand plants. More recently, an as yet unpublished (now in press) study of the Australian and New Zealand Orchidaceae has shown that *Cyrtostylis* is not allied to *Acianthus* but rather is sister to *Corybas* (which as circumscribed there now includes the segregate genera *Anzybas*, *Nematoceras*, *Singularybas* and *Molloybas*) (P. Weston pers. comm. November 2014).

## ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS
Yes

## ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

## FLOWERING
July–November

## FRUITING
August–March

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Difficult—should not be removed from the wild.

## ETYMOLOGY
**cyrtostylis**: Curved style
**oblonga**: Oblong

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY
Key to native orchids of New Zealand

## NVS CODE
CYROBL

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 44(+2)

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | Not Threatened
2012 | Not Threatened
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened
Jump to current conservation status

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT Help
The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland" Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

## 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.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2007: Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970). Some of this factsheet information is derived from Flora of New Zealand Online and is used under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 New Zealand licence.

## MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/cyrtostylis-oblonga/

## PDF DATE

27 May 2026