Danhatchia australis

COMMON NAMES
Yoania, Danhatchia

BIOSTATUS
Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp, DPS, DPT, EF, TO
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Orchids

FLOWER COLOURS
Grey, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Saprophytic, subterranean, leafless, rhizomatous, perennial herb lacking chlorophyll. **Rhizomes** buried deep within partially decomposed leaves and leaf mould; 3–5 mm diameter, vermiform, brittle, more or less opaque, pinkish grey coloured, much-branched and interwoven, irregularly bearing tufts of long colourless hairs, and vestigial scale-leaves. **Stems** erect up to 200 mm tall, unbranched, pale rose-pink, pinkish-grey, pale brown to mushroom grey, glabrescent to glandular-pubescent. **Scale-leaves** 1–7–(15), 10–15 mm long, chartaceous, much paler than stem, many-nerved, basal scale-leaves semi-tubular, those higher up open-sheathed. **Floral bracts** similar to scale-leaves. **Pedicels** very short. **Flowers** 1–5–(10), suberect. **Perianth** 6 mm long, brownish or pinkish-grey with white apices, externally more or less glandular-pubescent. **Dorsal sepal** more or less oblong, slightly concave; lateral sepals similar, more or less spreading. **Petals** similar, included within sepals. **Labellum** sessile, orbicular to broadly oblong, column-embracing; base broad, slightly pouched bearing on each side several fleshy hairs and/or elongated calli; median line thickened; sides becoming thick, fleshy and stiff towards apex, externally tuberculate; margins inturned, thin and membranous; mid-lobe minute, orbicular, deeply concave. **Column** almost as tall as labellum, basally subcylindric becoming winged, wings very narrow; filament broad, rigid; connective slightly produced; anther tall, erect, stationary, each cell with two sets of transversely oblique, closely packed, vermiform, sectile, pollinia; stigma appearing bilobed, often funneliform, with side lobes that flare widely in old flowers; rostellum long, narrow-triangular, wedged between the long pollinia.



Under taraire, Great Barrier Island. Jan 1983. Photographer: Ewen Cameron, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Danhatchia australis. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA
None. It could be confused with *Gastrodia* which can grow in similar habitats but orchids from that genus have much taller, glabrous, dark brown or black-brown, spotted stems bearing fewer scale-leaves, and larger flowers.

DISTRIBUTION
Indigenous. New Zealand (see de Lange & Molloy 1998): North Island (recorded from Waipoua south to Mt Pirongia but mainly found north of Waiuku; Te Hauturu-o-Toi / Little Barrier Island, Great Barrier Island (Aotea Island), Mokohinau Islands), South Island (Kaihoka Lakes area, North-west Nelson). Also Australia (New South Wales).

HABITAT
Coastal to lowland, in forest dominated by taraire (*Beilschmiedia tarairi*) and nīkau (*Rhopalostylis sapida*). This saprophytic orchid grows in deep leaf litter intermixed with a fungus which is mostly associated with nikau. Popular mythology has it that it is exclusively associated with taraire but this is incorrect (see de Lange & Molloy 1998). It has also been collected once growing from amongst dense shrubs of Spanish heather (*Erica lusitanica*). Easily overlooked as it does not necessarily flower every year, and after heavy flowering plants may rest for several years before flowering again.

THREATS
Not threatened in New Zealand—but not very common either, and at risk from orchid collectors.

GENUS
Danhatchia

FAMILY
Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY
Danhatchia australis (Hatch) Garay et Christenson

SYNONYMS
Yoania australis Hatch

TAXONOMIC NOTES
Plants discovered in Australia in 2009 and initially assigned to *Danhatchia australis* were then described as a new species *D. novaehollandiae* D.L.Jones et M.A.Clem. (Jones & Clements 2018). However, subsequent critical assessment of this species by Orchid experts at the New South Wales Herbarium (NSW, Sydney) can see no valid reason to uphold *D. novae-hollandiae* (M.A.M. Renner pers. comm.). It is their view, and this is accepted here, that *Danhatchia novaehollandiae* is the same as *D. australis*.
See:
http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&search=yes&namesearch=Danhatchia+novaehollandiae&dist=
http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=sp&name=Danhatchia~australis

ENDEMIC TAXON
No

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
December–February

FRUITING
December–April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
A saprophytic orchid which is unknown from cultivation. Should not be removed from the wild.

ETYMOLOGY
australis: Southern

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

NVS CODE
DANAUS

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 22

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, EF, Sp, TO
2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp, TO
2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon
2004 | Not Threatened
Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES
Auckland: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT, PF, RR, Sp, TL, TO? 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
de Lange PJ, Molloy BPJ. 1998. Two new localities for *Danhatchia australis* (Orchidaceae). *New Zealand Botanical Society Newsletter 51(1)*: 6–9.
Jones DL, Clements MA. 2018. *Danhatchia novaehollandiae* (Orchidaceae: Goodyerinae), a new species from south-eastern Australia. *Australian Orchid Review 83(4)*: 56–57.
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 2 March 2007. Description adapted from Moore & Edgar (1970), supplemented with observations obtained from fresh plants and herbarium specimens.
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.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION
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MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/danhatchia-australis/

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