

Dendrobium cunninghamii

COMMON NAME

Winika, pekapeka, Christmas orchid, bamboo orchid

SYNONYMS

Winika cunninghamii (Lindl.) M.A.Clem., D.L.Jones et Molloy

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Dendrobium cunninghamii Lindl.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

NVS CODE

WINCUN

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 40

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North, South, Stewart and Chatham Islands

HABITAT

Coastal to montane. Mostly epiphytic on forest tree trunks and branches, sometimes on fallen logs, and found as a also rupestral on rocks, cliff faces or banks. Occasionally colonising brick or concrete walls within urban areas.



Pinehaven, Upper Hutt. Dec 2004.
Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



Rimutaka Forest Park. Feb 1998. Photographer:
Jeremy Rolfe

FEATURES

Epiphytic or rupestral, rhizomatous, perennial forming discrete tufted patches up to 1.5 x 2.0 m. Rhizome suberect to ascending, similar to stems, producing numerous more or less branched roots. Stems cane-like, long persistent, firm, wiry, and mostly slender, thickening towards base, up to 7 mm diameter, yellow-green, bright yellow to orange, glossy with obvious internodes and thickened nodes; unbranched in lower third, otherwise bearing numerous lateral, widely spreading, somewhat drooping branches. Leaf-sheaths tubular, minutely papillose, imbricating, covering younger stems; leaf lamina 30-50 x 3 mm, dark green, green to yellow-green darkened at junction with leaf-sheath, narrow-linear. Inflorescences 1-6-8-flowered, produced several nodes back from the active vegetative apex, usually as short, slender laterals; floral bracts inconspicuous, short, tubular; pedicel very slender, longer than ovary. Perianth 20-25(-30) mm diameter, glabrous, white (rarely cream), lip and column usually rose-pink, purplish to green. Sepals elliptic, spreading, apices more or less reflexed; lateral sepals fused under labellum and attached to column-base. Petals slightly broader. Labellum shorter, distinctly trilobed; lateral lobes small, often highly coloured, inclined to stand parallel to one another; mid-lobe white, broad, subacute, minutely crenulate; disc with 4-5 pale-coloured, low, longitudinal ridges terminating just above short claw and near to a colourful knob-like nectary situated at the end of the column-foot. Column about as long as its foot, cylindrical, very narrowly winged. Capsules initially green, ovoid, maturing greyish-white, often striped with maroon or purple.

SIMILAR TAXA

None. This species is easily recognised by its bright yellow to orange cane-like stems, tufted growth habit and spectacular, large white and usually rose-pink or purple flowers.

FLOWERING

December - June

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White

FRUITING

January - August

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown in a hanging basket in standard orchid mix. Often can be strapped to a tree trunk and provided it is kept moist during the drier months it grows readily. This species does best in semi-shade. Should not be removed from the wild

ETYMOLOGY

dendrobium: From the Greek dendron 'tree' and bios 'life', alluding to the wild plants being epiphytic on trees

cunninghamii: Named after Allan Cunningham (1791 – 1839) who was an English botanist and explorer, primarily known for his travels to Australia (New South Wales) and New Zealand to collect plants. Author of *Florae Insularum Novae Zelandiae Praecursor*, 1837-40 (Introduction to the flora of New Zealand).

WHERE TO BUY

Occasionally available from specialist native plant nurseries

TAXONOMIC NOTES

The generic distinction of *Winika* from *Dendrobium* was always considered by many orchidologists dubious (M. Chase pers. comm. 2000), in part because little comparative data had been published to support the new monotypic genus (see Clements et al. 1997). Recently there has been much investigation into the validity of splitting the Australian *Dendrobium* into numerous segregate genera and some of those studies have included samples of *Winika* (Adams 2011; Burke et al. 2008). Garnock-Jones (2014) in reviewing these (and other) papers has questioned the continued recognition of *Winika* as distinct by New Zealand botanists, especially as outside New Zealand no one else is accepting it. Therefore, the traditional broad circumscription of *Dendrobium* is here favoured over the narrow, and *Winika* is treated as a synonym of *Dendrobium*.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2007. Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1997).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

- Adams, P.B. 2011: Systematics of Dendrobiinae (Orchidaceae), with special reference to Australian taxa. *Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society* 166: 105-126.
- Burke, J.M.; Bayley M.J.; Adams, P.B.; Ladiges, P.Y. 2008: Molecular phylogenetic analysis of *Dendrobium* (Orchidaceae), with emphasis on the Australian section *Dendrocoryne*, and implications for generic classification. *Australian Systematic Botany* 21: 1-14.
- Clements, M.A.; Jones, D.L.; Molloy, B. 1997: *Winika*, a new monotypic genus for the New Zealand orchid previously known as *Dendrobium cunninghamii* Lindl.. *The Orchadian* 12: 214-215.
- Garnock-Jones, P.J. 2014: Evidence-based review of the taxonomic status of New Zealand's endemic seed plant genera. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 52: 163-212.
- Moore, L.B.; Edgar, E. 1970: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. II. Government Printer, Wellington.

CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/dendrobium-cunninghamii/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/dendrobium-cunninghamii/>