

# Dracophyllum acerosum

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

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## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Upright, multi-branched, shrub or small tree of montane to subalpine shrubland and tussock grassland, bearing green, grass-like leaves, and white flowers borne singly on short terminal branches.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Erect multi-stemmed shrub or small tree, 1–2 m tall. Bark on old branches grey to dark grey, smooth to finely fissured, young stems reddish brown. Leaves erect to spreading; lamina sheath 5–20 × 3.5–6.5 mm, coriaceous, striate, truncate to auricled and margin membranous, smooth or with the top half ciliate; lamina linear to linear-triangular, 30–190 × 0.7–1.5 mm, adaxial surface rugose, abaxial surface glabrous, slightly striated; margins serrulate with 14–21 teeth per 10 mm; apex triquetrous. Inflorescence a solitary terminal flower on lateral branchlets, sessile, shorter than leaves; flower bracts persistent, over-topping flowers, leaf like, ovate-lanceolate, 8.5–17.0 × 2.5–5.0 mm, surfaces glabrous with a tuft of scabrid hairs at apices, margins ciliate. Sepals lanceolate to narrowly ovate, 8.0–13.0 × 2.0–2.5 mm, shorter to equaling the corolla tube, adaxial surfaces with the top half pubescent; abaxial surfaces glabrous; margins ciliate; apices hard. Corolla white to light green turning yellowish; corolla tube cylindrical, 7.0–8.0 × 1.8–2.2 mm; corolla lobes reflexed, ovate-triangular to triangular, shorter than corolla tube, 1–3 × 1–2 mm; apices inflexed, subacute; surfaces glabrous. Stamens inserted on corolla tube in upper third, filaments 0.5–1.0 mm long; anthers included, rectangular, light yellow, 0.8–1.0 mm long. Ovary cylindrical, 2.2–3.0 × 1.3–1.7 mm; glabrous; nectary scales rectangular, 1.5–1.6 × 0.7–0.8 mm, apices retuse; style included, 1.3–1.5 mm long, glabrous; stigma capitate. Fruit sessile, light brown, 4.0–4.5 × 4.0–4.2 mm, oblong, apex round, glabrous. Seeds yellowish brown, ovoid, 1.45–1.5 mm long, testa slightly reticulate.

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Dracophyllum acerosum* is somewhat similar to *D. kirkii* from which it differs in being erect-stemmed, many branched, and with adult leaves that are narrower (0.7–1.5 mm) and with the adaxial lamina surface rugose with fewer teeth per 10 mm (14–21) on the lamina margin. Also the leaf apex is distinctly triquetrous. The adaxial surface of the flower bract differs from that of *D. kirkii* in having a tuft of scabrid hairs at the apex. The sepals are longer (8–13 mm) with the top adaxial half pubescent. The corolla tube is longer (7–8 mm) with no apical ridge on the corolla lobes that is also glabrous on the adaxial surface. The ovary also differs that it is cylindrical. *Dracophyllum acerosum* is also similar to *D. uniflorum* var. *frondosum* from which it differs in lacking the prominent apical ridge on the petal and having a subacute corolla lobe apex. The margins of the flower bracts are ciliate not serrulate, while the nectary scales are longer (1.5–1.6 cf. 1.2–1.5 mm). The apex of the ovary of *D. acerosum* is round not truncate like that of *D. uniflorum* var. *frondosum* and the style is much shorter (1.3–1.5 cf. 3.0–4.0 mm).



Banks Peninsula. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 11/11/2018, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Banks Peninsula. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 23/06/2019, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## HABITAT

Montane to subalpine. On mountain slopes, ridgelines and hillsides, also along river or stream sides and on moraine terraces at elevations at the treeline, in subalpine shrubland, tussock grassland, grassland or herbfield. Often common in areas which have been burnt in the recent past.

## GENUS

Dracophyllum

## FAMILY

Ericaceae

## AUTHORITY

Dracophyllum acerosum Bergg.

## SYNONYMS

Dracophyllum uniflorum var. acicularifolium Cheeseman; Dracophyllum acicularifolium (Cheeseman) Cockayne nom. illeg.; Dracophyllum peninsulare W.R.B.Oliv.

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

November – May

## FRUITING

January - August

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult - should not be removed from the wild

## ETYMOLOGY

**dracophyllum:** Dragon leaf, from its likeness to the dragon tree of the Canary Islands

**acerosum:** From the Latin acus 'sharp', meaning sharp or pointed

## NVS CODE

DRAACE

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 26

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Venter, S. 2009: A taxonomic revision of the genus *Dracophyllum* Labill. (Ericaceae). Unpublished Phd Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (6 April 2012). Description adapted from Venter (2009).

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/dracophyllum-acerosum/>

**PDF DATE**

08 June 2026