Dracophyllum pronum

COMMON NAME
trailing neinei

FAMILY
Ericaceae

AUTHORITY
Dracophyllum pronum W.R.B.Oliv.

FLORA CATEGORY
Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE
DRAPRO

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened

Island saddle, November. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth

Island saddle, November. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth

BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Low-growing sprawling reddish-green woody shrub with many small narrow leaves that are flattened on the upper surface inhabiting mountain areas of the South Island. Leaves to 11mm long, flattened, with tuft of hairs at base (lens needed). Flowers small, white, solitary, at end of twigs.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand: South Island.

HABITAT
Dracophyllum pronum is a common species of montane to subalpine habitats in the South Island. In these habitats it is characteristically found on gentle to steep rocky slopes, ridgelines and along the bases of stable screes, also within subalpine shrubland, shrub–tussockland, herbfield, fellfield, bogs or tussock grassland.

FEATURES

Procumbent scrambling shrub or subshrub 10–250 mm tall. Branches decumbent to prostrate. Bark on old branches grey and smooth, sometimes with deep fissures in very old specimens, young stems reddish brown. Leaves spreading; lamina sheath 0.7–4.0 × 1.0–3.0 mm, shoulders tapering to rounded and margin membranous, ciliate. Lamina linear, 2.5–11.0 × 0.5–1.0 mm, adaxial surface flat, with a tuft of scabrid hairs at base; margins serrulate with 100–140 teeth per 10 mm; apex obtuse to acute. Inflorescence a sessile, terminal, solitary flower on lateral branchlets; shorter than leaves; inflorescence bract shorter than flower, coriaceous, ovate at base, 3.2–4.1 × 0.6–0.8 mm, margins serrulate; flower bract shorter than flower, 3.5–4.0 × 0.6–0.8 mm, foliose, ovate; margins serrulate. Sepals 1.7–4.5 × 1.4–1.6 mm, ovate–lanceolate, equal or longer than corolla tube; margins ciliate. Corolla white to light pink; corolla tube 2.5–4.0 × 1.5–1.8 mm, cylindrical; corolla lobes 1.0–2.0 × 1.0–2.0 mm, reflexed, ovate–triangular, apex inflexed, subacute; apical ridge present, adaxial surface papillate. Stamens inserted on corolla tube in the middle, filaments 0.5–1.0 mm long; anthers 0.8–1.0 mm long, included light yellow, oblong. Ovary ovate, 0.5–1.0 × 0.5–1.2 mm, apex round; nectary scales 0.5–0.8 × 0.5–0.7 mm, rectangular, apices retuse; style included, 1.0–1.5 mm long, glabrous; stigma capitate. Fruit light brown, 1.2–2.5 × 1.5–2.0 mm, oblong, glabrous, apex truncate. Seeds 0.46–0.5 mm long, yellowish brown, ovoid, testa slightly reticulate.

SIMILAR TAXA

Dracophyllum pronum is recognised by the often scrambling growth habit, decumbent to prostrate stems; by the flat adaxial lamina surface; by the foliose flower bracts which are shorter than the corolla tube and furnished with a serrulate margin; and by the sepals which are equal to or longer than the corolla tube, and which have a prominent apical ridge on the corolla lobe. The nectary scales of Dracophyllum pronum are also distinctively retuse. Of the other procumbent Dracophyllum species, D. pronum is most often confused with D. palustre. From that species it differs by the shorter leaves (2.5–11.0 mm cf. 14.0–27.0 mm) and by the acute rather than triquetrous lamina apex. The inflorescence bracts of D. pronum is also diagnostically shorter than the flower (not like those of D. palustre equal in length), far narrower (0.6–0.8 mm cf.1.5–2.0 mm) and with serrulate green rather than white margins. The corolla tube is also narrower (1.5–1.8 mm cf. 2.0–2.2 mm) and the apical ridge of the corolla lobes of D. pronum is absent in D. palustre.

FLOWERING

December – April

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

February - June

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild. Don’t be tempted - take photographs instead!

ETYMOLOGY

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

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (4 April 2012). Description adapted from Venter (2009)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics 11: 285-309

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): Dracophyllum pronum Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/dracophyllum-pronum/ (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/dracophyllum-pronum/