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**
Dicotyledonous Trees & Shrubs

**NVS CODE**
DRAPRO

**CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS**
2012 | Not Threatened

**PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES**
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened

**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