

Dracophyllum pubescens

FAMILY

Ericaceae

AUTHORITY

Dracophyllum pubescens Cheeseman

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

DRAPUB

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Low growing sprawling shrub bearing blue-green narrow pointed hairy leaves clustered towards the tip of twigs inhabiting Northwest Nelson. Leaves of juvenile plants longer than adult, adult leaves 14-54mm rapidly tapering to sharp tip, covered in fine short hairs. Flowers in clusters of 3-5 at end of twigs.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (north-west Nelson)

HABITAT

Dracophyllum pubescens is a species of montane to subalpine areas where it grows in subalpine shrubland, on exposed cliff faces and bluffs, or in herbfield, fellfield or grassland.



Mt Peel, Nelson, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Multi-stemmed shrub 0.5–0.8 m tall. Branches decumbent to prostrate. Bark on old branches grey to dark grey, deeply fissured, young stems reddish brown. Leaves juvenile and adult, glaucous. Juvenile leaves spirally arranged along branches, spreading; lamina sheath 10–13 × 6–8 mm; shoulders rounded with margin ciliate in upper half; lamina 60–80 × 5–7 mm, linear-triangular to lanceolate, surfaces pubescent; margins serrulate with 60–70 obscured teeth per 10 mm. Adult leaves crowded at tips of branches, spreading, glaucous; lamina sheath 3.3–7.0 × 3.5–6.0 mm, striate, shoulders rounded to truncate and margins membranous, ciliate; lamina 14–65 × 2–6 mm, linear-triangular to lanceolate, adaxial surface densely pubescent to tomentose; abaxial surface sparsely pubescent; prominently striated; margins ciliate with 80–100 obscure teeth per 10 mm. Inflorescence a terminal spike on lateral branchlets; shorter than leaves, erect, lax, 15–17 mm long, oblong; inflorescence bract over-topping flowers, 7.4–21.8 × 1.6–2.5 mm, glaucous, ovate-lanceolate at base, pubescent, margin ciliate. Flowers 3–5, sessile; flower bract shorter than or equaling flower length, 9.5–13.0 × 1.0–2.5 mm, ovate-lanceolate, adaxial surface pubescent; abaxial surface with sparse scabrid hairs; margin ciliate. Sepals 5.0–5.5 × 1.3–2.0 mm, ovate-lanceolate to ovate, shorter than corolla tube, surfaces glabrous on the top half, pubescent on adaxial surface; margin ciliate. Corolla white; corolla tube 5.0–6.0 × 1.6–2.0 mm, cylindrical; corolla lobes spreading horizontally to reflexed, 1.5–2.0 × 1.5–2.0 mm long, triangular, shorter than corolla tube, apices inflexed, acute; adaxial surface papillate. Stamens inserted on corolla tube in the upper third, filament 0.5–0.8 mm long; anthers included, 0.8–1.0 mm, rectangular, light yellow. Ovary oblong, 1.4–1.5 mm long and wide, glabrous, apex truncate; nectary scales separate, 0.8–1.0 × 0.7–1.0 mm, rectangular, apices irregularly toothed; style included, glabrous, 1.5–2.0 mm long; stigma capitate. Fruit 1.5–2.0 × 1.5–2.0 mm, light brown, obovoid; apex truncate, glabrous. Seeds 0.7–1.0 mm long, brown, filiform, testa weakly and finely reticulate.

SIMILAR TAXA

Dracophyllum pubescens is recognised by the grey, broadly fissured bark, dimorphic foliage (i.e. with distinct juvenile and adult foliage); by the glaucous, broad, pubescent leaves and by the few-flowered 1–4 racemes. The sepals of *D. pubescens* are 5.0–5.5 mm long, abaxially pubescent, while the corolla tube is 5–6 mm long. Of the other *Dracophyllum* species it is most similar to *D. kirkii* from which it differs by the distinctively pubescent leaves, and 3–5-flowered racemes (the flowers of *D. kirkii* are by contrast always solitary).

FLOWERING

December – March

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

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

MORE INFORMATION

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