

# 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**

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Dracophyllum pubescens* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network.

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

### **MORE INFORMATION**

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