

Dracophyllum rosmarinifolium

COMMON NAMES

common grass tree, inaka

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Grassy reddish or green often sprawling shrub with many erect twigs bearing clusters of narrow pointed leaves that point away from the stem and that sheath the stem at their base. Leaves 8.5–40mm long by 0.5 to 1.5mm wide. Flowers solitary, at tip of short side branches.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Multi-stemmed shrub 0.3–1.0 m tall. Branches erect to spreading and much-branched. Bark on old branches grey to dark grey, finely to deeply fissured, young stems reddish brown. Leaves erect to spreading, light to olive green; lamina sheath 2.0–8.5 × 2.5–4.0 mm; shoulders rounded to truncate and margins membranous, ciliate; lamina 8.0–55.0 × 0.59–1.5 mm linear to linear-subulate; adaxial surface glabrous, occasionally rugose, with a tuft of short scabrid hairs at base; margins serrulate with 70–80 teeth per 10 mm; apex obtuse to acute and triquetrous. Inflorescence a terminal solitary erect flower; shorter than leaves; inflorescence bract shorter to equaling flower, 5.0–13.0 × 1.0–2.0 mm, narrowly ovate-lanceolate at base, adaxial surface scabrid at base; margins serrulate. Flowers sessile. Sepals 4.5–12.0 × 1.2–2.5 mm, lanceolate to ovate-lanceolate, equaling to longer than corolla tube, top half rarely shortly pubescent; margins ciliate. Corolla white turning pale yellow with age, occasionally light pink; corolla tube 4.0–7.0 × 1.5–2.0 mm, cylindrical; corolla lobes reflexed, 2.0–2.5 × 1.2–2.0 mm, triangular, shorter than corolla tube, apex inflexed, subacute to acute; apical ridge present, adaxial surface papillate. Stamens inserted on corolla tube in the upper third, filaments 0.3–0.5 mm long; anthers included, 0.7–1.0 mm long, oblong, initially pink turning light yellow. Ovary 1.7–2.0 × 1.0–2.0 mm, obovate, apex round; nectary scales 0.7–1.5 × 0.4–0.7 mm rectangular, apices retuse to irregularly toothed; style included, 1.5–2.5 mm long, glabrous, not lengthening in fruit; stigma capitate. Fruit 3.7–4.0 × 3.8–4.0 mm, obovoid, light brown, apex round, glabrous. Seeds 0.8 – 1.0 mm long yellowish brown, ovoid, with the testa slightly reticulate.

SIMILAR TAXA

Dracophyllum rosmarinifolium is recognised by the non-pendulous erect to much-branched spreading growth habit, linear spreading leaves, solitary flowers that terminate short branchlets, sepals equaling or longer than the corolla tube, prominent apical ridge on the corolla lobes, inflexed corolla lobe apex and an obovoid ovary. *Dracophyllum rosmarinifolium* is most similar to *D. frondosum* from which but differs in having erect to spreading not arching, to decumbent or pendulous branches; inflorescence bracts that equal the flower length but do not exceed them; sepals which are longer than the corolla tube (never equal to them) and by the corolla tube which is shorter (5–7 mm compared to 7–10 mm in *D. frondosum*).



Dracophyllum rosmarinifolium. Photographer: Jane Gosden, Date taken: 20/05/2013, Licence: CC BY-NC-SA.



Dracophyllum rosmarinifolium. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North (Tararua Ranges) and South Islands (throughout the South Island)

HABITAT

Dracophyllum rosmarinifolium is a shrub inhabiting montane woodland and shrubland to subalpine or alpine grassland, herbfield, fellfield or bog land within mountain gullies, mountain slopes and ridges, bluffs, plateaus and also valley floors.

GENUS

Dracophyllum

FAMILY

Ericaceae

AUTHORITY

Dracophyllum rosmarinifolium (G.Forst.) R.Br.

SYNONYMS

Epacris rosmarinifolia Forst.f.; *Dracophyllum uniflorum* Hook.f.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October – May

FRUITING

December - August

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult - should not be removed from the wild

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ETYMOLOGY

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

rosmarinifolium: Rosemary leaf

NVS CODE

DRAROS

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 26

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025" Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

Venter, S. 2021: A taxonomic revision of the Australasian genera *Dracophyllum* and *Richea* (Richeeae: Styphelioideae: Ericaceae). *Australian Systematic Botany* 34: 1–205.

ATTRIBUTION

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

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

25 May 2026