

Earina aestivalis

COMMON NAMES

bamboo orchid, summer earina

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

FLOWER COLOURS

Cream, Green

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Epiphytic or rupestral, rhizomatous, perennial, producing numerous leafy, unbranched, long persistent, wiry, cane-like stems up to 600 mm long.

Rhizomes extensive, much intertwined and firmly attached to substrate, fleshy, more or less spongy, initially creamy white maturing buff-yellow.

Leaf-sheaths imbricating, persistent, distichously arranged, 5–12 mm long, 4–8 mm diameter, not split, tubular, flattened, each overlapping with and covering the lower $\frac{1}{3}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ of the leaf-sheath above, exposed surface ivory to pale whitish-yellow, distinctly dark maculate with broad, long oblong to oblong-ovoid dark purple-black spots. Leaf-sheath junction with leaf lamina distinctly flared. **Leaves** weakly flexuose scarcely curved in upper portion; lamina short-lived, disarticulating at leaf-sheath junction, prominent 3-nerved, 60–100 × 6–8 mm, green to dark green, lanceolate, tapering in upper $\frac{1}{3}$ gradually to an acute, minutely acicular tip; lateral veins conspicuous, midrib of upper lamina deeply and prominently channelled. **Inflorescence** a racemose panicle up to 80 mm long, mostly pendulous; racemes 2–8, usually well spaced on fine, slender, wiry axis, each 20–40 mm long; floral bracts c. 4.0–4.5 mm long, scarcely overlapping, prominently longitudinally ridged, completely covering the very short pedicels. **Perianth** 10–14 mm diameter, opening widely (flaring), pale, slightly greenish-cream to greenish yellow. **Sepals** elliptic, subacute. **Petals** slightly broader and more obtuse. **Labellum** broader and very conspicuous, yellow-orange to deep apricot, flaring widely at flowering, broadly oblong with broader proximal portion connect by a narrow waist-like neck to the almost equally broad distal lobe; base with two inconspicuous ridges leading down to a small pit-like nectary.

Column shorter than labellum, narrow to base, wings absent or minute, pollinia long-oval. **Capsules** elliptic-ovoid, ovoid, deeply, longitudinally grooved, yellow green to green maturing grey.

SIMILAR TAXA

Earina mucronata Lindl., from which *E. aestivalis* differs by its shorter stems, flaring and broader leaf-sheaths, and distinctly broader leaves, broad, prominently deeply depressed and channelled, midrib, larger oblong to oblong-ovoid dark purple spotting along the stem, larger and fewer flowers, generally longer column, and by its later flowering time (usually late summer, rather than spring to early summer) Some people maintain that *E. aestivalis* flowers are fragrant while *E. mucronata* are not. No clear distinction is evident.



Upper Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 29/12/2012, Licence: CC BY.



Manawatu Gorge. Jan 2011. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island, South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura, Chatham Islands.

HABITAT

Coastal forest, where it is usually a low epiphyte on tree trunks and branches. Occasionally found on cliff faces and rock outcrops

GENUS

Earina

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Earina aestivalis Cheeseman

SYNONYMS

None

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Chatham Island plants are problematic. They seem to grade into *E. mucronata*. Elsewhere this species seems reasonably distinctive. However, further study into the status of this species is needed.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

December–March

FRUITING

January–August

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Can be grown from the division of established plants. Rooted pieces should be strapped to a log, fern trunk or wood slab and suspended in a sheltered, warm position. Water frequently until well established. Should not be removed from the wild.

CULTIVATION

Occasionally offered by specialist native plant nurseries

ETYMOLOGY

earina: Springtime

aestivalis: From the Latin aestes 'summer'

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

[Key to native orchids of New Zealand](#)

NVS CODE

EARAES

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 40, 41

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPR, TL Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the [“Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland”](#) Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Data Deficient 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

de Lange P, Rolfe J, St George I, Sawyer J. 2007. Wild orchids of the lower North Island. Department of Conservation, Wellington, NZ. 194 p.

Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001>.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2007. Description based on herbarium and fresh material—see also de Lange et al. (2007).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/earina-aestivalis/>

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