

# Earina autumnalis

## COMMON NAMES

Easter orchid, raupeka

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

## FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Epiphytic or rupestral, rhizomatous, perennial, producing numerous leafy, unbranched, long persistent, wiry, cane-like stems up to 1.5 m long.

**Stems** erect if short, pendulous otherwise. **Rhizomes** extensive, much intertwined and firmly attached to substrate, fleshy, more or less spongy, initially creamy white maturing grey-white, thickly covered with sheathing scale-leaves or their weathered, fibrous remains. **Leaf-sheaths** closely imbricating, persistent, distichously arranged, 5–14 mm long, 3–4 mm diameter, cylindric to tubular, deeply split, scarcely flattened, each overlapping with and covering the lower  $\frac{1}{3}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$  of the leaf-sheath above, exposed surface pale grey with dark margins, weakly and diffusely maculate or not, spots if present orbicular, purple-black. Leaf-sheath junction with leaf lamina distinctly flared. **Leaves** weakly flexuose usually down-curved in upper portion; lamina persistent, disarticulating at leaf-sheath junction, weakly 1–3-nerved, 40–120 × 5–8 mm, mostly dark glossy green, broadly lanceolate, widest near base, tapering in upper third gradually to broad, subacute tip; lateral veins inconspicuous, midrib of upper lamina deeply and prominently channelled. **Inflorescence** a racemose panicle. **Panicle** up to 100 mm long, mostly stiffly erect, rather wiry; racemes numerous, arranged distichously at short intervals up the stiff central axis, each lateral stem to 10 mm long, usually bearing a few crowded, empty bracts and up to 3 sessile flowers. **Perianth** 13–16 mm diameter, opening widely (flaring), waxy white. **Sepals** elliptic, slightly keeled subacute. **Petals** slightly broader and more obtuse. **Labellum** broad and obtuse, white except for yellow base, standing erect and half enclosing the column, transversely rhomboid, not lobed; distal margins slightly thickened and recurved; base with two crescent-shaped ridges leading down to a small bright yellow or yellow-orange pit-like nectary. **Column** shorter than labellum, broadest at base, wings minute, present as small lobes about level with the stigma, pollinia clavate. **Capsules** elliptic-ovoid, ovoid, deeply, longitudinally grooved, dark green maturing grey.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Easily distinguished from *Earina aestivalis* Cheeseman and *E. mucronata* Lindl. by the virtually unspotted, more or less cylindric leaf-sheath; usually dark green leaves, stiffly erect inflorescences, and strongly pleasantly perfumed, consistently white flowers with broad yellow-based labella.



Mt Karioi, south of Raglan. Photographer: John Sawyer, Date taken: 01/07/2013, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Pukaha Mount Bruce. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 27/02/2016, Licence: CC BY.

## DISTRIBUTION

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

## HABITAT

Coastal to montane. Epiphytic, rupestral or terrestrial. Mostly on the trunks and branches of forest trees but also on rocks, cliff faces, banks and fallen, moss covered logs.

## GENUS

Earina

## FAMILY

Orchidaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Earina autumnalis* (G.Forst.) Hook.f.

## SYNONYMS

*Epidendrum autumnale* Forst.f.; *Earina suaveolens* Lindl.; *Earina alba* Col.

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

January–June

## FRUITING

April–August

## LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown in a hanging basket in standard orchid mix. Often can be strapped to a tree trunk and provided it is kept moist during the drier months it grows readily. This species does best in semi-shade. The strongly perfumed flowers are especially attractive. Should not be removed from the wild.

## CULTIVATION

Occasionally available from specialist native plant nurseries.

## PLANT OF THE MONTH

This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see [Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for May 2007](#) for the full story.

## ETYMOLOGY

**earina**: Springtime

**autumnalis**: Autumn flowering

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

## NVS CODE

EARAUT

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 40

## 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: DPS, DPT 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 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

Moore LB, Edgar E. 1970. Flora of New Zealand, Volume II. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Monocotyledones except Gramineae. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 354 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 adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970). Some of this factsheet information is derived from [Flora of New Zealand Online](#) and is used under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 New Zealand](#) licence.

## MORE INFORMATION

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

## PDF DATE

27 May 2026