**Libertia ixioides**

**COMMON NAME**
Mikoikoi, NZ iris

**SYNONYMS**

**FAMILY**
Iridaceae

**AUTHORITY**
Libertia ixioides (Forst.f.) Spreng.

**FLORA CATEGORY**
Vascular – Native

**ENDEMIC TAXON**
Yes

**ENDEMIC GENUS**
No

**ENDEMIC FAMILY**
No

**STRUCTURAL CLASS**
Monocotyledonous Herbs

**NVS CODE**
LIBIXI

**CHROMOSOME NUMBER**
2n = 228

**CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS**
2012 | Not Threatened

**PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES**
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened

**DISTRIBUTION**
Endemic. New Zealand: North, South and Stewart Islands.

**HABITAT**
Coastal to montane. Often locally common on ridges, cliffs, gullies, river banks, coastal cliffs, and upland forest. It has been recorded as epiphytic in some northern sites.
FEATURES
Plants consisting of leafy fans, close together on short, much branched rhizomes, joined by short stolons. Leaves 150–1160 × 3–12 mm, the two surfaces similar; inclined to turn yellow where exposed to full sun; leaf bases pale red-green; nerves many, median ones crowded to form pale midrib; margins often finely scabrid, leaf in transverse section convex lens-shaped, two rows of vascular bundles present, marginal vascular bundle present, sclerenchyma present on inside of leaf sheath. Peduncles long (2/3 length of the inflorescence), but inflorescence short, usually not carrying flowers or fruits above leaves. Panicle narrow, but much branched, or sometimes simply branched; lower bracts long (50–410 mm), green, lanceolate, upper bracts narrow and pale brown, occurring singly; 1–6 flowers (often 2) per branch. Pedicels stout, 10–28 mm long, glabrous. Flower bud sometimes yellowish, usually much smaller than ovary, flowers 8–25 mm diameter; tepals all white internally, widely patent; outer tepals about ½ length of inner tepals and narrower, elliptical, flattened, with apiculus; inner tepals orbicular-elliptical, shortly unguiculate, not usually covering outer tepals, slight cleft at tips. Staminal filaments very shortly connate; anthers c.2 mm long, yellow. Ovary pale, larger than perianth bud; style branches sometimes slightly winged, usually pointing outwards. Capsule 7–25 mm long, 5–14 mm diameter, barrel-shaped, ripening from green to yellow to black, partially dehiscing by short loculicidal splitting; old valves pale and not widely patent. Seeds 1.0–2.0 × 1.0–1.5 mm, rounded or occasionally angular, reticulate-foveolate, bright tangerine orange.

SIMILAR TAXA
The large ovaries (when compared with perianth bud size at anthesis) and large partially dehiscing capsules which dry to a pale tan colour (rather than black) separates this species from all other New Zealand Libertia. Libertia ixioides differs from L. grandiflora and L. mooreae by its shorter inflorescences, large sepals, and oblong petals, and yellow leaf colour in summer. It differs from L. peregrinans through the lack of raised coloured mid-veins on the leaves, and from L. peregrinans, L. edgariae, L. cranwelliae, and L. ixioides × L. peregrinans by the short rather than long rhizomes. It differs from L. micrantha by its taller stature, rhizome type, and larger flowers

FLOWERING
September – December

FLOWER COLOURS
White, Yellow

FRUITING
January - December

LIFE CYCLE
Seeds are possibly dispersed by wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown from fresh seed and by the division of established plants. Very forgiving and tolerant of a wide range of situations. Next to Libertia peregrinans, L. ixioides is the most widely cultivated of the New Zealand Libertia. Forms with highly coloured foliage are now especially popular.

ETYMOLOGY
libertia: Named after Marie-Anne Libert, (1782-1865) born & died in Malmedy, province of Liège, Belgium; botanist and mycologist
ixioides: Like an ixia

ATTRIBUTION
Description modified from Blanchon et al. (2002)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

MORE INFORMATION