

Libertia ixioides

COMMON NAME

Mikoikoi, NZ iris

SYNONYMS

Sisyrinchium ixioides Forst.f., *Libertia tricolor* Lem.; *Moraea ixioides* (G.Forst.) Thunb.; *Ferraria ixioides* (G.Forst.) Willd.; *Nematostigma ixioides* (G.Forst.) A.Dietr.; *Renealmia ixioides* (G.Forst.) Ker Gawl.; *Tekelia ixioides* (G.Forst.) Kuntze

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.



Libertia ixioides. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Libertia ixioides. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth

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 dehiscent 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 dehiscent 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

Blanchon, D.J.; Murray, B.G.; Braggins, J.E. 2002: A taxonomic revision of *Libertia* (Iridaceae) in New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 40: 437–456.

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

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/libertia-ixioides/>