

# 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

Herbs - Monocots

## NVS CODE

LIBIXI

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 228

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

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, Licence: CC BY-NC.



*Libertia ixioides*. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

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/>