Libertia micrantha

COMMON NAMES
native iris, mikoikoi

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Not Threatened
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Monocots

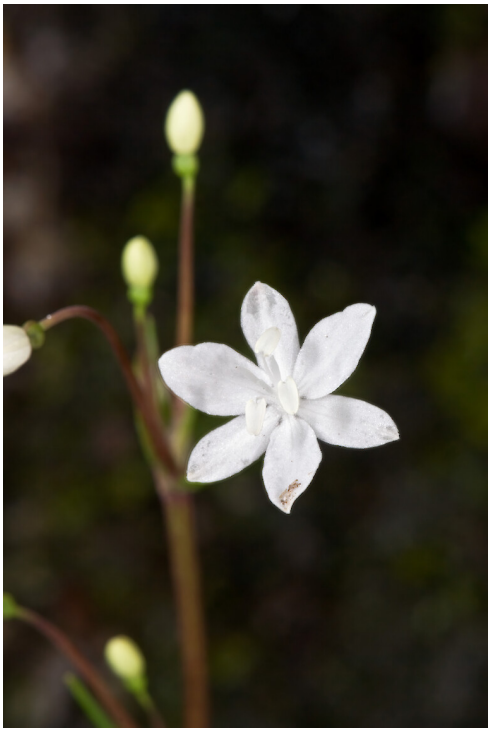
FLOWER COLOURS
White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Plants consisting of leafy fans erect or semi-erect; sparsely branched leafy rhizomes, 30–180 mm long, attached to substratum, sometimes insecurely, by thin, wiry roots. Leaves 30–220 × 1–5 mm, the downward-facing surface much duller than the upper, due to more white lines of stomata and raised cells being present; veins inconspicuous, leaf bases green or pale yellow, leaf margins often finely scabrid, stomata often only present on lower surface of leaf; leaf in transverse section simple, only one row of vascular bundles present, marginal vascular bundle absent, no sclerenchyma on inside of leaf sheath. Inflorescences long, usually greater than leaves; peduncle slender. Panicle simple; bracts 5–35 mm long, narrow lanceolate, green or brown when dried, in clusters of three or more; 1–8 flowers on very slender, usually pubescent pedicels, 13–35 mm long. Flowers white, 5–15 mm diameter, predominantly tepallate, outer whorl slightly shorter and narrower, elliptical with apiculus, inner whorl larger, elliptical with apical cleft. Staminal filaments very shortly connate; anthers c.1.5 mm long. Ovary triquetrous, c.¼ length of the perianth bud at anthesis; style branches not winged, pointing upwards. Capsule triquetrous, 2–3 × 2–5 mm; dehiscing by loculicidal splitting; valves keeled and strongly recurved at dehiscence, green-brown. Seeds 0.75–1.0 × 1.0–1.2 mm, rounded to egg-shaped, almost smooth, yellow.

SIMILAR TAXA
Libertia micrantha differs from all the other New Zealand species of Libertia by its smaller size, the presence of white lines on the abaxial side of the leaf, anatomically simple leaves, leafy rhizomes, bunches of bracts at inflorescence branches, pubescent pedicels, tepallate flowers, white pollen sacs, broad pollen sac connectives, and by its diploid chromosome number

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (from about Mangonui south to Wellington but scarce in Northland), South Island (from Nelson and Marlborough to Fiordland, uncommon in the east)

Tararua Forest Park. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 29/12/2007, Licence: CC BY.



Kauaeranga Valley. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 31/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.

HABITAT
A widespread and locally common species of high rainfall forests and river banks. Mostly montane and in cloud forest in Northland otherwise widespread, though favouring montane habitats, or cooler places in lowland forest. Often found on fallen logs and root mounds, usually associated with mosses and liverworts

GENUS
Libertia

FAMILY
Iridaceae

AUTHORITY
Libertia micrantha A.Cunn.

SYNONYMS
Libertia pulchella sensu Moore (1967)

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
September – December

FRUITING
December – June

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown from fresh seed and by the division of established plants. This species does best in semi-shade. Libertia micrantha is an attractive plant that deserves to be more widely cultivated that it is.

ETYMOLOGY
libertia: Named after Marie-Anne Libert, (1782-1865) born & died in Malmedy, province of Liège, Belgium; botanist and mycologist
micrantha: Tiny flower

NVS CODE
LIBMIC

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 38

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 At Risk – Regionally Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp, DPS, DPT, DE, PF, RR 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 At Risk – Regionally Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DPS, NS, Sp 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

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.
Young, M. 1990. A lowland site for *Libertia pulchella*. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal, 45:4.*

ATTRIBUTION

Description modified from Blanchon et al. (2002)

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/libertia-micrantha/

PDF DATE

08 July 2026