

Pterostylis areolata

COMMON NAMES

greenhood

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Terrestrial, tuberous, glabrous, spring to summer-green perennial herb, either solitary in forming small patches of 3–8 plants through vegetative extension. Plant at flowering 70–250 mm tall. **Stem** erect, smooth, dark green to reddish green, internodes < leaves. **Leaves** 2–4, with entire margins, shape changing from base to top of stem; lamina 30–90 × 10–25 mm, dark green to yellow-green, the lowest and those of non-flowering plants, broadly elliptic, elliptic, to obovate, apex obtuse to subacute, tapering to a reddish-green broadly winged petiole; uppermost leaves shorter, acute to acuminate; not overtopping the flower. **Flower** solitary, tipping forwards, large, dark green, green striped with white toward the back of the galea. **Ovary** erect. **Dorsal sepal** 30–35 mm tall, mostly erect then sharply horizontal to deflexed, apex shortly acuminate without caudae. **Lateral sepals** diverging at a narrow angle, apices acuminate to shortly caudate, rarely exceeding galea, usually narrowly spreading, decurved. **Petals** slightly shorter than dorsal sepal, very broad, apex acute. **Labellum** basally red, apex often distinctly darker; lamina elliptic, slightly arched, toward a narrowly obtuse, flat or pinched in apex. **Column** mostly taller than labellum; stigma elongate-ovate with a prominent truncate apex.

SIMILAR TAXA

Close to *P. australis* Hook.f. from which it differs by the fewer, consistently wider elliptic to obovate leaves which do not overtop the galea (rather than leaves which grade from the elliptic (rarely broadly elliptic) to almost linear-lanceolate and may or may not overtop the flower); and by the acuminate, only slightly caudate lateral sepals, and elongate-ovate uniformly red stigma. Unlike some southern populations of *P. australis*, the leaves of *P. areolata* are never finely denticulate.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (Tararua Ranges and possibly the Ruahines), South Island (widespread, mainly east of the main divide but also in Nelson and Fiordland).

HABITAT

Lowland to subalpine. In short or tall tussock grassland, grey scrub, on the margins of wetlands and in open forest.

GENUS

Pterostylis



Mount Cass. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Habit. Photographer: Geoffrey M. Rogers, Date taken: 11/12/2015, Licence: CC BY-SA.

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Pterostylis areolata Petrie

SYNONYMS

None

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October–November

FRUITING

November–February

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult—should not be removed from the wild. Basic orchid mix consists of 2 parts medium coarse sand, ideally clean river sand; 2 parts soil, humus or leaf-mould; 1 part weathered sawdust or rotting wood; 1 part granulated bark. For *Pterostylis* shade of 50% and pots kept evenly moist.

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ETYMOLOGY

pterostylis: Winged column

areolata: Netted, with a network pattern between the veins

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

NVS CODE

PTEARE

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 44

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

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.

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.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Pterostylis areolata* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pterostylis-areolata/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pterostylis-areolata/>

PDF DATE

27 May 2026