

# Pterostylis auriculata

## COMMON NAMES

greenhood

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp, DPR, DPS, DPT, PF

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

## FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Red/Pink

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Terrestrial, glabrous, tuberous summer-green perennial. Plant erect, all parts distinctly glossy, up to 380 mm tall. **Stems** bright-red to reddish green. **Leaves** 4, all cauline, of more or less equal length, usually overtopping the galea, 125–180 × 10–12 mm, pale-green to dark green, lanceolate, distinctly acuminate, arching with apices drooping, widest near sessile sheathing base, midrib prominent, reddish. **Flower** solitary, narrowly erect, green with a reddish tint. **Ovary** slender, 10 mm long, reddish, linear-ellipsoid. **Dorsal sepal** 15–18 mm long, narrowly ovate, shortly acuminate. **Lateral sepals** erect, narrowly divergent, sinus large, apices caudate, 8–9 mm long, overtopping galea, spreading, narrow and more or less falcate caudae. **Petals** narrowly ovate, shortly acuminate. **Labellum** 10 × 2.3–4.6 mm, dark-red, linear-oblong, distinctly arched and tapering toward the truncate or slightly retuse to emarginate apex, midrib prominent, keeled below, deeply depressed above, somewhat twisted, with 4 flexuous lateral veins on each side; basal callus wide, shortly curved, and coarsely fimbriate. **Column** slender about as long as labellum, wings prolonged upwards as subulate apices nearly 2.3 mm long, narrow auriculate; auricles 4.5 mm long, with the apices closely and finely ciliate.

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Pterostylis banksii* has narrow, more upright leaves and larger flowers; *P. australis* has short sepals and broad upright leaves; both lack the tapered labellum. The various forms included in *P. montana* are smaller plants, with oblong apically twisted labella. Distinguished from *P. silvicultrix* by longer, narrower, arching leaves; longer dorsal and lateral sepals; lateral sepals which are not twisted or turned forwards, and straight rather than twisted labellum.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (Kapiti Island), South Island (south-east Otago (Catlins Coast) and Southland), Stewart Island/Rakiura, Chatham Islands (recorded in November 2008 from one site on Rangihaute / Rangiauria / Pitt Island).



Flower smaller, narrower; galea not minutely papillose; sepals shorter than southern specimens. Kapiti Island. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 26/11/2007, Licence: CC BY.



Flower smaller, narrower; galea not minutely papillose; sepals shorter than southern specimens. Kapiti Island. Photographer: Jeremy

## HABITAT

Coastal to montane.(up to 521 m a.s.l. on Kapiti Island). Favours permanently damp, heavily shaded, sites in dune forest in the Catlins, south-eastern South Island, and under dense kamahi (*Pterophylla racemosa*) and māpou (*Myrsine australis*) on Kapiti Island. On the Chatham Islands it grows with *Pterostylis banksii* and *P. silvicultrix* in mixed matipo (*Myrsine chathamica*), ribbonwood (*Plagianthus regius* subsp. *chathamicus*), tarahinau (*Dracophyllum arboreum*) forest.

## THREATS

Seemingly uncommon and probably biologically sparse, but known habitats are in protected areas.

## GENUS

*Pterostylis*

## FAMILY

Orchidaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Pterostylis auriculata* Colenso

## SYNONYMS

None

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

October–November

## FRUITING

December

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult—should not be removed from the wild.

## WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

## ETYMOLOGY

**pterostylis**: Winged column

**auriculata**: Small-eared

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

## NVS CODE

PTEAUR

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 44

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, Sp

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Data Deficient

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Data Deficient 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

Colenso W. 1889: A description of some newly-discovered phaenogamic plants being a further contribution toward making-known the botany of New Zealand. *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute* 22: 459–493.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2007: Description modified from Colenso (1889) supplemented with observations made from fresh material (Kapiti and Chatham Islands)

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

## MORE INFORMATION

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

## PDF DATE

25 May 2026