

Pterostylis australis

COMMON NAME

southern greenhood

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Pterostylis australis Hook.f.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

NVS CODE

PTEAUS

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 44$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (present only from the the East Cape area south and becoming more common in the southern third of the island), South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura.

HABITAT

Lowland to subalpine (up to 1200 m a.s.l.) in scrub and tall forest. Generally preferring beech (*Nothofagaceae*)-dominated forest in the North Island and South Island. Mostly montane in the North Island. Sometimes found in forestry plantations.



Pterostylis australis. Photographer: Department of Conservation, Licence: Public domain.



Pterostylis australis. Photographer: Department of Conservation, Licence: Public domain.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Terrestrial, tuberous, glabrous, spring to summer-green perennial herb forming large colonies through vegetative extension. Plant at flowering 100–250 mm tall. **Stem** erect, smooth, dark green to reddish green, internodes < leaves. **Leaves** 4–5, shape changing from base to top of stem; lamina 40–150 × 10–16 mm, dark green to yellow-green, the lowest and those of non-flowering plants, elliptic to broadly elliptic, apex subacute, base subsessile or with a reddish-green winged petiole, margins entire or sometimes finely toothed; mid-stem and upper leaves longer and slightly narrower, more tapered, rarely narrowly lanceolate, margins entire or finely denticulate, 1, 2 or none of the leaves overtopping the flower. **Flower** solitary, large, dark green to pale green striped with white. **Ovary** erect. **Dorsal sepal** 25–45 mm tall, often rather smoothly arcuate but sometimes erect below then sharply horizontal above, apex acuminate often shortly caudate; lateral sepals diverging at a narrow angle, apices strongly reflexed backwards, spreading. **Petals** shorter than dorsal sepal, acute or acuminate. **Labellum** basally dark green flushed red or red from mid-section to apex, apex distinctly darker; lamina lanceolate-oblong, slightly arched, broadened almost to middle then narrowing to an obtuse, more or less deflexed, and decurved, pinched tip. **Column** as tall as labellum; stigma linear, often as broad as column, sometimes overlapped by wings from above.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

SIMILAR TAXA

Allied to *Pterostylis banksii* A.Cunn., and sometimes regarded as a form of it. Also close to *P. areolata* Petrie. It differs from *P. banksii* by the shorter, broader leaves, much shorter dorsal sepal and consistently arched labellum. From *P. areolata* it differs by the gradation from the elliptic (rarely broadly elliptic) basal leaves to almost linear-lanceolate mid-stem leaves; usually obviously caudate lateral sepals, and linear stigma

FLOWERING

November–January

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, White

FRUITING

January–April

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.

ETYMOLOGY

pterostylis: Winged column

australis: Southern

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

TAXONOMY

On Stewart Island/Rakiura, especially, this species often has distinctly toothed to finely denticulate leaf margins.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2007: Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970).

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.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

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