

# Pterostylis australis

## COMMON NAMES

southern 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 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 sessile 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.

## 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

## 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.



Aorangi Range. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 02/10/2010, Licence: CC BY.



Palliser Bay. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 03/10/2009, Licence: CC BY.

## 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.

## GENUS

Pterostylis

## FAMILY

Orchidaceae

## AUTHORITY

Pterostylis australis Hook.f.

## SYNONYMS

None

## TAXONOMIC NOTES

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

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

November–January

## 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

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

## NVS CODE

PTEAUS

## 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

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## MORE INFORMATION

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

## PDF DATE

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