

Pterostylis foliata

COMMON NAMES

grassland greenhood

BIOSTATUS

Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: SO, Sp

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular


STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

FLOWER COLOURS

Brown, Green

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Terrestrial, tuberous, glabrous, spring to summer-green perennial herb, either solitary or forming small colonies of 3–6 plants through vegetative extension. Plant at flowering 150–400 mm tall. **Stem** stiffly erect, smooth or sparsely and unevenly puberulent, dark green to yellow green; usually elongating following fruit set; upper internodes usually longer than stem leaves. **Basal leaves** 2–4, yellow-green to dark green, sessile, arranged in a more or less loose to crowded rosette; lamina up to 80 × 25 mm, elliptic, margins smooth, crisped or undulose, apex subacute, gradually narrowed into a short, winged petiole. **Cauline leaves** 1–2, yellow-green to green, 20–30 mm long, more or less foliaceous, closely sheathing, uppermost sometimes reaching but scarcely overtopping flower. **Flower** solitary, erect, white with broad green to greenish-brown stripes, often brown toward the apex. **Ovary** erect, papillose. **Dorsal sepal** 20–30 × 20 mm long, erect for  of length then curving forwards, apex acute and more or less horizontal, extending no further than petals. **Lateral sepals** closely embracing galea, papillose on the fused portion, sinus narrow, not protruding, diverging at a narrow angle, tips caudate up to 18 mm long and overtopping galea. **Petals** only a littler shorter than dorsal sepal, broad almost to apex. **Labellum** dark green above and paler beneath, protruding, narrow-triangular, arched, tapering to a narrowly obtuse apex, margins slightly upturned. **Column** shorter than labellum; stigma elliptic, more or less prominent.

SIMILAR TAXA

None. The yellow-green to dark green plants, with their stiffly erect stems bearing closely sheathing bract like leaves; basal leaves which are arranged in a loose rosette, and usually with crisped or wavy margins; and small, erect brownish flowers readily distinguish this species from all other indigenous *Pterostylis* species.

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: North Island, South Island. Also Australia

HABITAT

Coastal to montane (up to 800 m a.s.l.) in grassland, amongst low scrub, within open forest and within plantation forest. Often found growing with the adder's tongue fern (*Ophioglossum coriaceum* A.Cunn.).



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



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

GENUS

Pterostylis

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Pterostylis foliata Hook.f.

SYNONYMS

Pterostylis gracilis Nicholls, Pterostylis vereenae R.S.Rogers

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October–December

FRUITING

December–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

foliata: Leafy

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

NVS CODE

PTEFOL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 44-46

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

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

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: SO, Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Not Threatened

[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

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-foliata/>

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