

# Pterostylis graminea

## COMMON NAMES

grass-leaved 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, mostly solitary or forming small patches of 3–5 plants through vegetative extension. Plant at flowering 10–330 mm tall. **Stem** erect, smooth, dark green, to reddish green, internodes < leaves. **Leaves** strictly erect, up to 4–6–(8), with entire margins, size changing from base to top of stem; the largest leaf on stem 80–150 × 5–10 mm, usually smaller, green to yellow-green, all linear-lanceolate, keeled with long-acuminate apices, widest near the sessile sheathing base, overtopping the flower. **Flower** solitary, usually tipping slightly forwards, small and delicate, front closely striped dark green and white, back of galea sparingly striped with green, mostly completely white. **Ovary** erect. **Dorsal sepal** 18–30 mm tall, erect then sharply horizontal, bearing few, widely spaced bands of green, the spacing of these widening toward rear to leave broad white bands or a completely white back; apex distinctly down-curved, acuminate to shortly caudate. **Lateral sepals** diverging at a narrow angle, initially erect, apex curved to the front of galea, acuminate, shortly caudate, overtopping galea. **Petals** broad almost to apex, a little shorter than dorsal sepal. **Labellum** basally red otherwise greenish-brown or green with a distinctly darker apex; lamina oblong to narrowly oblong, slightly arched and then bend forward smoothly and symmetrically between the lateral sepals, flat in cross-section, with midrib only slightly prominent, and grading from weakly to completely indiscernible toward apex, apex emarginate. **Column** more or less tall as the labellum; stigma narrow, scarcely distinguished from column.

## SIMILAR TAXA

An extremely variable species which probably encompasses a number of distinct entities worthy of taxonomic recognition at some level. *Pterostylis graminea* is most likely to be confused with *P. agathicola* D.L.Jones, Molloy et M.A.Clem., which is endemic to kauri (*Agathis australis* (D.Don.) Lindl.)-dominated forests and differs by its fewer, drooping to almost horizontal, rather than erect leaves, which rarely overtop the flower; by the much longer, attenuated dorsal sepal that arches upwards; and by the usually reddish labellum which has a prominent raised midrib and a pinched in, somewhat twisted rather than more or less flat and emarginate apex. A form found in North Island lowland peat bogs is very similar to *P. cernua* D.L.Jones, Molloy et M.A.Clem.



Tamahunga. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 14/10/2009, Licence: CC BY.



Longitudinal section of flower. Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 09/11/2013, Licence: CC BY.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island, South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura.

## HABITAT

Coastal to montane (up to 1000 m a.s.l.) mainly in indigenous forest, also in gumland scrub, peat bogs and within the more fertile lag zone of wetland margins. A variable species which in the current broad sense adopted by the New Zealand Flora series has no clear habitat preferences.

## GENUS

*Pterostylis*

## FAMILY

Orchidaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Pterostylis graminea* Hook.f.

## SYNONYMS

None

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

September–January

## FRUITING

October–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

**graminea:** Grassy

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

## NVS CODE

PTEGRA

## 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

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the [“Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland”](#) Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

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-graminea/>

## PDF DATE

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