

Pterostylis humilis

COMMON NAMES

greenhood

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

[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 colonies through vegetative extension. Plant at flowering 45–50–(150) mm tall. **Stem** erect, smooth, dark green, to blue-green, immersed within a loose basal rosette of leaves until the fruiting ovary elongates the stem. **Leaves** erect to somewhat spreading, 3–4, margins entire, though usually undulose in the basal $\frac{1}{3}$, overtopping the flower; lamina 40–90 × 15–25 mm, dark green to blue-green, broadly elliptic to oblong, apex obtuse to broadly subacute, base gradually narrowing into a broadly winged sheathing petiole. **Flower** solitary, erect, dark green, white striped. **Ovary** mostly erect. **Dorsal sepal** 20 mm tall, erect then horizontal; apex shortly acuminate. **Lateral sepals** diverging at a narrow angle, initially erect, apex acuminate to shortly caudate, overtopping galea. **Petals** almost as long as dorsal sepal, broad almost to apex. **Labellum** elliptic, shortly recurved, cucullate, scarcely protruding, apex acute, glabrous. **Column** slightly shorter than labellum; stigma prominent, broadly cordate, upward facing.

SIMILAR TAXA

Very close to *P. venosa* Colenso from which it differs by the prominent, upturned, heart-shaped, stigma, which is little longer than wide, and by the glabrous labellum surface.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (Central Volcanic Plateau and Mount Taranaki/Egmont), South Island (in the west from North-west Nelson to about the Buller River).

HABITAT

Montane to subalpine in beech (*Nothofagus* Blume) forest and subalpine scrub. Often in deep drifts of leaf litter, or amongst mosses. Sometimes on bare ground or growing at the base of boulders.

THREATS

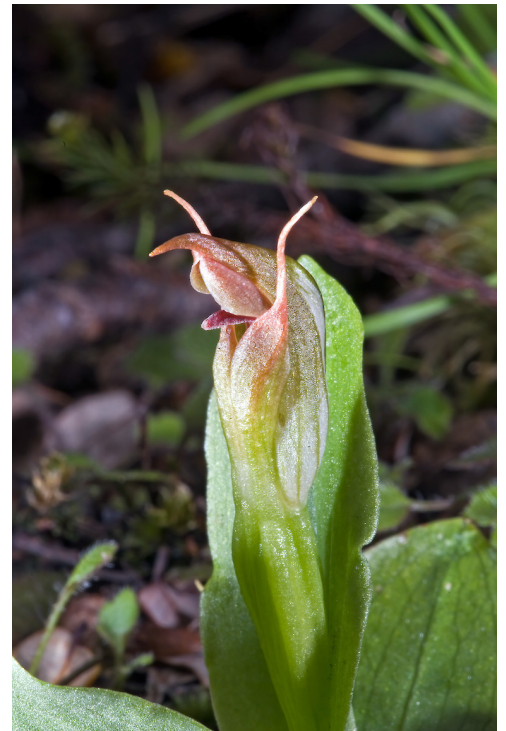
No apparent threats but not very common.

GENUS

Pterostylis



Mount Ruapehu. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 27/12/2008, Licence: CC BY.



Mount Ruapehu. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 27/12/2008, Licence: CC BY.

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Pterostylis humilis Rogers

SYNONYMS

None

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

November–January

FRUITING

December–March

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.

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

ETYMOLOGY

pterostylis: Winged column

humilis: Lowest, dwarf, small, slight

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

NVS CODE

PTEHUM

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 44

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: 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-humilis/>

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