Pterostylis oliveri

COMMON NAMES
Oliver's 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 100–380 mm tall. **Stem** more or less erect to decumbent, smooth, yellow green to green, internodes mostly shorter than leaves, sometimes very short near base. **Leaves** 4–6, spreading, margins entire, size changing from base to top of stem; lamina of lower leaves 50–100 × 20–30 mm, oval to broadly elliptic or narrowly obovate, apex obtuse, narrowing to a broadly winged, mostly short petiole; upper leaves progressively more acute, the uppermost little shorter but sessile, ovate, sometimes almost acuminate, often reaching but scarcely overtopping the galea. **Flower** solitary, erect, front mostly dark green finely striped with white, stripes of white widening toward back of galea with green narrowing. **Ovary** erect. **Dorsal sepal** 30–50 mm tall, slightly to distinctly inclined in its proximal portion, apex long, narrow, more or less parallel-sided with only weakly involute margins, strongly deflexed; lateral sepals diverging at a narrow angle, caudae of lobes greatly attenuated erect, sometimes strongly deflexed to the back of the galea. **Petals** much shorter than dorsal sepal with acute apices. **Labellum** narrowly triangular, slightly arched protruding. **Column** shorter than labellum; stigma narrowly ellipsoid, scarcely distinguished from column and rather flat.



Flower. Canvastown, S.I. Photographer: Matt Ward, Date taken: 18/11/2020, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Basal leaves of immature plants. Bealey, Aurthur's Pass S.I. Photographer: Matt Ward, Date taken: 13/11/2017, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA
Close to *Pterostylis patens* Colenso, from which it differs by the often decumbent or sprawling rather than consistently erect habit, distinctly wider oval to broadly elliptic rather than broadly lanceolate to linear-lanceolate (grassy) leaves; and by the lateral sepals whose caudae though very long are mostly held erect rather than consistently strongly deflexed back and down, sometimes meeting at the back of the galea.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (in the west from North-west Nelson to about Arthur's Pass National Park).

HABITAT
Montane forest and subalpine scrub (rarely above 1200 m a.s.l.). Often along stream sides or under shrubs growing in dense drifts of partially decomposed leaf litter. Sometimes common on track side banks and cuttings.

GENUS
Pterostylis

FAMILY
Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY
Pterostylis oliveri Petrie

SYNONYMS
None

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
December–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.

WHERE TO BUY
Not commercially available

ETYMOLOGY
pterostylis: Winged column

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY
Key to native orchids of New Zealand

NVS CODE
PTEOLI

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 44

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | Not Threatened
2012 | Not Threatened
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened
Jump to current conservation status

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.

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pterostylis-oliveri/

PDF DATE
25 August 2026