Pterostylis paludosa

COMMON NAMES
swamp greenhood

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT, PF, RR
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Orchids

FLOWER COLOURS
Green, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Terrestrial tuberous herb growing in dense colonies. **Sterile plants** 40–80 mm tall, 2–4-leaved; leaves linear-lanceolate, 25–60 × 7-11 mm, pale green to yellow-green (rarely dark green), margins entire or finely denticulate, apex subacute. **Flowering plants** 80–900 mm tall. **Leaves** 3–4, cauline, obliquely erect, pale green to yellowish green; lamina linear-lanceolate, 50–80 × 7–11 mm wide, sessile, sheathing at the base; margins entire or rarely finely denticulate; apex subacute. **Pedicel** 20–30 mm long, slender. **Ovary** 9–17 mm long, asymmetric, ribbed. **Flower** solitary, 18–20 × 5–6 mm, erect, translucent white and pale green to yellow green; galea gibbous at the base then erect before curving forwards in a shallow curve to the apex, the dorsal sepal slightly longer than the petals. **Dorsal sepal** ovate-lanceolate in outline when flattened, 24–26 × 13–16 mm, prominently expanded in the proximal third then suddenly narrowed and gradually tapered to the acute apex. **Lateral sepals** erect, tightly embracing the galea, with no lateral gap; upper part of the sinus very shallowly curved when viewed from the side, sloping to a narrow v when viewed from the front, scabrous; conjoined part 9–11 × 6–9 mm wide at the top, narrowed to 4 mm wide at the base, tapered into the free points; free points 9–11 mm long, tapered, erect, the tips extending just above galea. **Petals** obliquely oblong-lanceolate, 14–20 × 305 mm, falcate, acute, green with a white central area; flange vestigial. **Labellum** erect, curved suddenly forwards near the apex, raised; basal appendage 2.5–3.0 mm long, decurved, apex penicillate. **Column** 11.0–13.5 mm long, erect, green and white; column foot 1.5 mm long; wings 5.5–7.0 mm long; basal lobe 3.0 × 0.8 mm, at an angle of about 40 degrees, apex obtuse, inner margins incurved, sparsely ciliate; mid-section 2.5 mm long; green; apical lobe linear 1.2 mm long, obtuse. **Stigma** cordate, 3.0–3.3 × 2.0–2.2 mm, situated just below the column wings, raised. **Anther** 1.4 mm long, obtuse. **Pollinia** linear, 2 mm long, yellow, mealy. **Capsules** narrowly ellipsoid 15–17 × 3.0–3.5 mm, initially yellow green, maturing grey.

SIMILAR TAXA
Pterostylis micromega Hook.f. and an unnamed swamp dwelling orchid allied to *P. graminea* Hook.f., grow with and may be confused with *P. paludosa*. When flowering, *P. paludosa* and *P. micromega* are clearly different, but sterile specimens are harder to separate. Basal leaves of *P. micromega* are distinctly broader, spreading and have undulating margins. The basal leaves of the unnamed orchid allied to *P. graminea* are much smaller, finer, and grass-like. Flowering specimens are distinctive because the flowers are much smaller, and very conspicuously striped white and dark green.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic: New Zealand: North Island (Great Barrier Island (Aotea Island) to Waiouru), South Island (confined to the west from north-west Nelson to about Westport), Stewart Island/Rakiura.

HABITAT
Peat bogs and heathlands, usually in well-lit sites amongst mosses and sedges.

THREATS
Habitat loss through wetland drainage, and natural succession to taller vegetation. This species requires frequent disturbance to maintain itself. It is especially abundant following peat fires. The species is also at risk from plant collectors.

GENUS
Pterostylis

FAMILY
Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY
Pterostylis paludosa D.L.Jones, Molloy et M.A.Clem

SYNONYMS
Pterostylis furcata var. linearis Hatch

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
September–January

FRUITING
November–March

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown in a pot partially submerged in water. However, as with all indigenous orchids, this species should not be removed from the wild.

WHERE TO BUY
Not commercially available.

ETYMOLOGY

pterostylis: Winged column
paludosa: Of the swamps

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

Key to native orchids of New Zealand

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 44

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP, RR
2012 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: RR
2009 | At Risk – Declining
2004 | Serious Decline
Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Data Deficient Help
Current regional threat status assessments prepared according to Crisp et al. (2025) are displayed when available. The Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland" Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Jones DL, Molloy BPJ, Clements MA. 1997. Six new species of *Pterostylis* R.Br. (Orchidaceae) from New Zealand. *The Orchadian 12*: 266-281.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2007: Description based on Jones et al. (1997).

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

25 August 2026