

# Pterostylis puberula

## COMMON NAMES

dwarf greenhood

## BIOSTATUS

Native

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: Sp, CD, EF

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS


Orchids

## FLOWER COLOURS

Green, White

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Slender orchid up to 200 mm tall, stem and foliage often somewhat chlorotic. **Stem** pale silvery-green to pale yellow-green, covered in minute, harsh tubercles, distinctly though irregularly, puberulent.

**Rosette leaves** numerous, appressed; petiole distinctly though narrowly winged, 5–7 mm long; lamina 7 × 5 mm, silvery-green to pale yellow-green, ovate, acute. **Cauline leaves**, sparse, similar, sheathing. **Flower** solitary, silvery-white, striped green to pale green, set well above nearest bract. **Dorsal sepal** 10–15 mm, erect for  of length, then almost horizontal, apex obtuse to shortly acute. **Lateral sepals** fused, diverging widely, U-shaped in front view, then sharply contracted into long, slender, erect, filamentous caudae, these slightly clavate toward apex; caudae set well above galea. **Petals** = or longer than dorsal sepal, subacute.

**Labellum** oblong. **Column** longer than labellum; stigma long-oval, prominent.

## SIMILAR TAXA

The silvery-green to pale yellow-green, often somewhat chlorotic appearance, compact, tightly appressed rosette leaves, distinctly though minutely harshly tuberculate and irregularly puberulent stem, largely devoid of cauline leaves, blunt-ended dorsal sepal, and filamentous, slightly clavate caudae set this species apart from all other New Zealand greenhoods.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: Manawatāwhi / Three Kings Islands, North Island (from Te Paki to Hamilton Basin (Waikato) and southern Coromandel Peninsula, thence disjunct to Wellington (Taita Hills and near Eastbourne), South Island (North-west Nelson, near Westhaven). Since 1990 it has been reported only from Manawatāwhi / Great Island in the Manawatāwhi / Three Kings Islands, on the Hikurua / de Surville Cliffs (Te Paki) and from the Kauaeranga Valley, near Thames.

## HABITAT

Coastal to lowland on clay banks beneath light scrub, especially kahikatoa (*Leptospermum scoparium*), and gumland.



Te Paki. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 21/10/2009, Licence: CC BY.



Rosette leaves. Kauaeranga Valley. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 31/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.

## THREATS

Habitat loss and degradation through weed encroachment, natural regeneration of forest species, and pig rooting are the main threats. Also, over-collection by botanists and orchid enthusiasts has occurred in the past.

## GENUS

*Pterostylis*

## FAMILY

Orchidaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Pterostylis puberula* Hook.f.

## SYNONYMS

*Pterostylis nana* R.Br., *Pterostylis nana* auct. non. R.Br.; Rupp; *Linguella puberula* (Hook.f.) D.L.Jones, M.A.Clem. et Molloy

## TAXONOMIC NOTES

Jane et al. (2010) following a thorough rDNA (ITS) based analysis of the segregate genera erected for *Pterostylis* R.Br. by Szlachekto (2001) and Jones et al. (2002) found no support to continue their recognition. This view is followed here. Accordingly *Linguella* is treated as *Pterostylis*. Further, the claim to specific status for the New Zealand plant, which has variously been treated as conspecific with the Australian *P. nana* or as a distinct endemic *P. puberula* needs further critical evaluation. Pending further study *P. puberula* is retained for now as a distinct New Zealand endemic.

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Indeterminate

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

September–December

## FRUITING

September–January

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild

## PLANT OF THE MONTH

This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see [Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for July 2023](#) for the full story.

## ETYMOLOGY

**pterostylis**: Winged column

**puberula**: With tiny hairs

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

## NVS CODE

PTEPUB

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = (48), 50

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: EF, Sp  
2012 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DP, EF, Sp  
2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: EF, Sp  
2004 | Threatened – Nationally Critical  
[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Endangered | Qualifiers: Sp, DPR, DPS, DPT, RR 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.

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

de Lange P, Rolfe J, St George I, Sawyer J. 2007. Wild orchids of the lower North Island. Department of Conservation, Wellington, NZ. 194 p.  
Janes JK, Duretto MF. 2010. A new classification for subtribe Pterostylidinae (Orchidaceae), reaffirming *Pterostylis* in the broad sense. *Australian Systematic Botany* 23: 260–269. <https://doi.org/10.1071/SB09052>.  
Jones DL, Clements MA, Molloy BPJ. 2002. A Synopsis of the Subtribe *Pterostylidinae*. *Australian Orchid Research* 4: 129–146.  
Szlachekto, D.L. 2001: Genera et Species Orchidaliium 1. *Polish Botanical Journal* 46(1): 11–26.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 31 August 2006. Description based on de Lange et al. (2007).

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pterostylis-puberula/>

## PDF DATE

25 May 2026