Pterostylis tasmanica

COMMON NAMES
plumed greenhood

BIOSTATUS
Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: Sp, DPS, DPT, EF, SO

Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Orchids

FLOWER COLOURS
Green, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Tuberous, terrestrial spring to summer-green, glabrous orchid either solitary or growing in loose groups. Plants at flowering up to 180 mm tall. **Stem** wiry, smooth, enclosed in 3–(6) foliaceous leaves. **Rosette leaves** (4)–8–(18); petiole 6–15 mm long, distinctly winged; lamina 15–25 × 6–8 mm, yellow-green to dark green, broadly ovate, elliptical to elliptical-lanceolate, acute. **Cauline leaves** 1–2, narrower and broadly sheathing (closely embracing the stem). **Flower** 1–(2), up to 25 mm long, clearly separated from subtending foliaceous bract; translucent green with dark green longitudinal and transverse veins, brownish towards galea apex and lateral sepals, galea erect in proximal ≣ then obliquely erect or curved forwards nearly at 90 degrees. **Dorsal sepal** 18–23 × 12–13 mm, inflated at base and tapered to apex, with a short filiform apex 0.5–1.5 mm long. **Lateral sepals** deflexed; conjoined part 7–9 × 3–4 mm, tapered to c. 2 mm across at the base, with a thickened, dark green central pad, the margins incurved; free points 7–11 mm long, linear, usually brown, parallel or slightly divergent, apex subacute. **Petals** asymmetric, falcate 15–20 × 1.5–2.0 mm, dark green, narrowed in distal ½ to an attenuate, long-acuminate apex. **Labellum** prominent, protruding from sinus, arching, 13.0–15.0 × 0.5 mm, linear-filiform, clad for most of its length in long yellow plumose cilia, apex terminated by a dark brown, glabrous, somewhat irregular, spheroidal, knob-like callus 2.0 × 1.3 mm. **Column** erect, 12–14 mm long; column wings 4–5 mm long, basal lobe 1.5 × 1.0 mm, set at an angle of 20 degrees, inner margins incurved, sparsely white ciliate, apex obtuse; mid-section 3 mm long, transparent; apical lobe 1.8 mm long, shortly rostrate. **Pollinia** 2 mm long, yellow, oblong, mealy. **Capsule** asymmetrical, 1.2–1.6 × 6.0–8.0 mm, obovoid.



Hikurua / de Surville Cliffs, Te Paki. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 20/09/2011, Licence: CC BY.



Rosette leaves. Hikurua / de Surville Cliffs, Te Paki. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 21/10/2009, Licence: CC BY.

SIMILAR TAXA
None.

DISTRIBUTION
Indigenous. New Zealand: Manawatāwhi / Three Kings Islands, North Island (Northland, Waikato, Wellington), South Island (Nelson).

HABITAT
Scrub or forest margins, in damp mossy areas or drier more exposed sites. Often under gorse or manuka on clay hillsides.

THREATS
Lack of fires, competition from weeds (gorse) and over-collection by orchid enthusiasts. This species requires frequent disturbance, usually from fires to maintain an open habitat.

GENUS
Pterostylis

FAMILY
Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY
Pterostylis tasmanica D.L.Jones

SYNONYMS
Plumatichilos tasmanicum (D.L.Jones) D.L.Szlach.

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 (though that study did treat those orchids referred to *Plumatichilos* as *Pterostylis* sect. *Catochilus* Benth.). This view is followed here.c

ENDEMIC TAXON
No

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
October–December.

FRUITING
November–February

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Difficult—should not be removed from the wild. Strongly mycorrhizal this species will not flourish in cultivation and within a few years it exhausts itself and dies.

ETYMOLOGY
pterostylis: Winged column
tasmanica: Named after Abel Janzoon Tasman (1603-1659) who in the 17th century was the first European to sight Van Dieman's land (now known as Tasmania)

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

NVS CODE
PTETAS

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = c.50, 50-54

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: EF, SO, Sp
2012 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: EF, SO
2009 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: EF, PD, SO
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.
Northland: 2026 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Critical | Qualifiers: SO Help
Current regional threat status assessments prepared according to Crisp et al. (2025) are displayed when available. The Northland conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation status of indigenous vascular plants in Northland | Taitokerau" Ford et al. 2026 report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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. 1994. New species of Orchidaceae from south-eastern Australia. *Muelleria 8*: 177–192. https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/51467892#page/83/mode/1up.
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 Orchidalium 1. *Polish Botanical Journal 46(1)*: 11–26.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 7 April 2007: Description adapted from Jones (1994).

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

25 August 2026