

Thelymitra sanscilia

COMMON NAME

sun orchid

SYNONYMS

None. However, Flora II (Moore & Edgar 1970) regarded it as a sporadically occurring mutation of *T. pauciflora*.

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Thelymitra sanscilia Irwin ex Hatch

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 26$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: DP, EF, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: DP, EF, Sp

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: DP, EF, Sp

2004 | Threatened – Nationally Critical

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (apparently confined to Northland).

HABITAT

Open gumland scrub and in open ground in association with kānuka (*Kunzea linearis* (Kirk) de Lange et Toelken) woodland.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).



Mangonui. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 29/10/2008, Licence: CC BY.



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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Plant at flowering 100–400 mm tall. **Leaf** solitary, 100–300 × 10–15 mm, fleshy, strap-like, dark green or red-green, “v” shaped in cross-section. **Inflorescence** a slender spike-like raceme arising from leaf, 100–600 mm tall. **Flowers** (1)–3–(10), opening one at a time (if at all), and only on very still sunny days. **Perianth** 8–12 mm long, usually mauve, occasionally white, without stripes or spots. **Sepals, petals and labellum** similar, broadly elliptic, narrowing abruptly to an acute tip. **Column** white, with a brown band near apex; apex hooded, usually deeply cleft. **Column arms** falcate, erect usually without, or occasionally possessing 1 or 2 prominent hairs. **Post-anther lobe** overtopping anther, brown above middle and yellow on margin, inrolled as to appear deeply cleft, the 2-halves meeting along a midline above the anther.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

Key to native orchids of New Zealand

SIMILAR TAXA

Most closely allied to the New Zealand forms of *T. pauciflora* R.Br. from which it chiefly differs by the near absence of hairs on the column arms of the flower.

FLOWERING

September–October

FLOWER COLOURS

Violet/Purple, White

FRUITING

December–January

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult—should not be removed from the wild.

THREATS

Known from a handful of sites from Te Paki to Pipiwai near Whangarei. Not common at any particular location.

ETYMOLOGY

thelymitra: Woman’s hat

WHERE TO BUY

As far as is known this species is not in cultivation.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2007. Description subsequently published in Rolfe & de Lange (2010).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Rolfe JR, de Lange PJ. 2010. Illustrated guide to New Zealand sun orchids, *Thelymitra* (Orchidaceae). Jeremy Rolfe, Wellington, NZ. 57 p.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Thelymitra sanscilia* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/thelymitra-sanscilia/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/thelymitra-sanscilia/>