Thelymitra sanscilia

COMMON NAMES
sun orchid

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: Sp, DPR, DPS, DPT, EF
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Orchids

FLOWER COLOURS
Violet/Purple, White

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 ellliptic, 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 aling a midline anove the anther.

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.

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.

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

GENUS
Thelymitra

FAMILY
Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY
Thelymitra sanscilia Irwin ex Hatch



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


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

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
September–October

FRUITING
December–January

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Difficult—should not be removed from the wild.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
FACU: Facultative Upland
Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY
thelymitra: Woman's hat

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

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 26

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: DP, EF, Sp
2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: DP, EF, Sp
2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: DP, EF, Sp
2004 | Threatened – Nationally Critical
Jump to current conservation status

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.

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

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION
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MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/thelymitra-sanscilia/

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