

Thismia rodwayi

COMMON NAMES

Thismia

BIOSTATUS

Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp, DPS, DPT, T?O

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Monocots

FLOWER COLOURS

Orange, Red/Pink

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Saprophytic, reddish, pinkish or pinkish-white glabrous plant growing within deep leaf litter. Roots sparse, 1-1.5 mm diameter, branching at 10-20 mm intervals, with each fork producing an unbranched erect set 5-20 mm long. Scale leaves sparse, ovate, acute with the largest three just below flower, these 5 x 2 mm. Flower up to 20 mm long, solitary, terminal red, red-orange rarely white with orange striping. Perianth-tube 10 x 8 mm, turbinate, translucent; outer lobes 4 x 1 mm, narrow-triangular, erect or reflexed; inner lobes 4-5 x 2.5 mm, arching inwards and firmly connate above to form a mitre with broad fenestrae in its sides, the projecting keel of the inner lobe produced into a free appendage that varies in length. Stamens pendent from short, usually red annulus; free filaments short, incurved; anthers broader and connate into a pale tube that reaches halfway down perianth-tube; pollen sacs small, widely separated; connectives delicately membranous and elaborately lobed. Nectaries 6, below anthers, each lying on the line of junction of 2 adjacent connectives and enclosed within a membranous pouch. Ovary short-turbinate, 1.5 x 2 mm, upper surface concave; style stout, 1 mm.; stigmas truncate-obovate, bilobed; ovules with long funicles, crowded on stalked placentae. Fruit fleshy, the upper portion becoming chartaceous and transparent at maturity to expose numerous brown seeds.

SIMILAR TAXA

None.

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. In New Zealand recorded only from the North Island where it has been reported from near the Hokianga Harbour, Waipoua and Trounson Forest, Hakarimata Range, Mt Pirongia, Te Kauri Scenic Reserve, Walter Scott Reserve, near Taumarunui, Taurewa, near Ketetahi Springs (Tongariro), Taurewa, and at Opepe Scenic Reserve. Easily overlooked. Present in Australia.

HABITAT

A saprophytic plant that has been found in coastal to montane forest and shrubland, where it usually grows in deep leaf litter near the base of trees. It has been found in association with a wide variety of tree and shrub species but most recent records come from cut over forest margins or regenerating forest.



Thismia rodwayi. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Taken at Ketetahi (January). Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

THREATS

An apparently naturally uncommon, biologically sparse species. However, it is extremely small, usually occurring partially buried in leaf litter, and so it is often mistaken for a fungus. It is probably more overlooked than it is truly uncommon. This species is often found by accident in leaf litter.

GENUS

Thismia

FAMILY

Thismiaceae

AUTHORITY

Thismia rodwayi F.Muell.

SYNONYMS

Bagnisia hillii Cheeseman; *Sacrosiphon rodwayi* (F. Muell.) Schlt.

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

November - February

FRUITING

December - March

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

A saprophytic plant which will not grow in cultivation. Should not be removed from the wild.

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ETYMOLOGY

thismia: Thismia is an anagram of the legume genus *Smithia*. *Smithia* honours Sir James Edward Smith (1759-1828) co-founder and first president of the Linnean Society of London, botanist and physician.

rodwayi: In honour of Leonard Rodway (1853-1936) a London trained dentist who arrived in Hobart in 1880. Remembered for his contribution to the study of Tasmanian botany. Leonard served as honorary government botanist from 1896 to 1932 and during this time he produced *The Tasmanian Flora* (1903) which became a standard reference for forty years.

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, T?O, Sp

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, Sp, T?O

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, SO, EF

2004 | Sparse

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Data Deficient | Qualifiers: Sp, DPR, DPS, DPT, PF, SO 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

Bell, R. 1971. *Thismia rodwayi* at Pirongia. Wellington Botanical Society Bulletin, 37: 67

Moore, L.B.; Edgar, E. 1970: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. II. Government Printer, Wellington.

Steele, R.H. 1966. Note on the occurrence of *Thismia Rodwayi* F. Muell. at Taurewa, North Island, New Zealand. Tuatara 14 (3)

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet Prepared by P.J. de Lange (1 August 2004). Description based on Moore & Edgar (1961).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/thismia-rodwayi/>

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