

# Thelymitra sanscilia

## COMMON NAMES

sun orchid

## BIOSTATUS

Native

## 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 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.

## 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.

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: Sp, DPR, DPS, DPT, EF

## THREATS

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

## DETAILED TAXONOMY

## FAMILY

Orchidaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Thelymitra sanscilia* Irwin ex Hatch

## SYNONYMS

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



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



*Thelymitra sanscilia*. Photographer: Kevin Matthews, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## ECOLOGY

### 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).

## OTHER INFORMATION

### 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

## REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

### 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

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

### MORE INFORMATION

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

### PDF DATE

12 October 2024