

Microtis parviflora

COMMON NAME

onion-leaved orchid

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Microtis parviflora R.Br.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

NVS CODE

MICPAR

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 44

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: Kermadec Islands, Manawatāwhi / Three Kings Islands, North Island (scarce south of Waikato and Bay of Plenty), South Island (Marlborough Sounds, North-west Nelson and the northern West Coast. Probably also in Australia.

HABITAT

Coastal to lowland. Favouring open clay pans, sand dune hollows, and other areas of exposed soil with little overhead vegetation. Common in gumland scrub, on the margins of peat bogs, in seral forest and within geothermal fields.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).



Bream Tail Reserve, 3/11/95. Photographer: Eric Scanlen, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Habitat. Puketi Forest, Northland. Photographer: Matt Ward, Date taken: 08/10/2018, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Terrestrial, glabrous, colony forming, fleshy, tuberous bright green to yellow-green perennial herb. Plants at flowering 100–400–(700) mm tall. **Tubers** globose to ovoid. **Stem** erect, terete. **Leaf** solitary, usually overtopping inflorescence, bright green to yellow-green, closely sheathing stem for much of length, linear-terete, hollow, 400 × 8 mm long. **Inflorescence** a raceme up to 300 × 10 mm. **Flowers** 10–80, up to 3 mm diameter, shortly-stalked and closely spaced, more or less overlapping. **Perianth** green to yellow-green, segments up to 2.2 mm long, widely spreading, thick and fleshy. **Dorsal sepal** 1.5–2.0 mm long, ovate, erect or projecting forwards, cucullate, concave, column-embracing, acute, apex shortly recurved, smaller than ovary at flowering; lateral sepals shorter and narrower, subacute, strongly deflexed, usually curled under. **Petals** shorter still, narrowly obtuse, erect, usually partially hidden under dorsal sepal. **Labellum** sessile, tongue-like, up to 2 mm long, green or yellow-green, more or less triangular-cordate, decurved but more or less slightly projecting forwards, broader at base narrowing to an obtuse apex terminated by a down-turned apiculus; margin entire to sinuate (with marginal cells occasionally, slightly enlarged), smooth; anterior callus usually present, somewhat variable in size; basal calli prominent, dark green, ovate, paired and parallel, surrounding a distinct small pouched bulge on the under side of the labellum. **Column** short, obtuse, base of column wider than stigma, otherwise narrowing behind stigma, wings membranous throughout. **Anther** terminal, erect, situated above stigma, hemispherical, pollinia spheroidal, pollen granular. **Stigma** broadly ovate; rostellum ovate. **Capsules** broadly ovoid, ovoid-ellipsoid, brown when ripe.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

Key to native orchids of New Zealand

SIMILAR TAXA

Easily distinguished from *M. unifolia* (G.Forst.) Reichb.f. and *M. oligantha* L.B.Moore by the more or less triangular labellum, which narrows abruptly to a down-turned apiculate tip, has a pouched base and an almost entire or smooth margin.

FLOWERING

September–March

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Yellow

FRUITING

December–May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown in a sunny position. Should not be removed from the wild. Often invades urban lawns in places adjacent to gum land scrub (such as in western Auckland).

ETYMOLOGY

microtis: Tiny eared

parviflora: From the Latin parvus 'small, puny' and flores 'flowers', meaning small-flowered.

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

TAXONOMIC NOTES

New Zealand plants referred to *M. parviflora* are possibly distinct and may warrant separate taxonomic recognition. It is not clear if they are endemic, and at this stage NZPCN has assumed that they are not.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2007. Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Moore LB, Edgar E. 1970. Flora of New Zealand, Volume II. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Monocotyledones except Gramineae. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 354 p.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/microtis-parviflora/>