

Corybas papa

COMMON NAMES

mudstone spider orchid

SYNONYMS

Corysanthes papa (Molloy et Irwin) Szlach.; *Nematoceras papa* (Molloy et Irwin) Molloy, D.L.Jones et M.A.Clem.

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Corybas papa Molloy et Irwin

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 36$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (seems to be wholly western in distribution from about Port Waikato south to the western Ruahine Range).

HABITAT

Coastal to montane (up to 1100 m a.s.l.). Favouring base rich substrates, especially calcaerous mudstones, siltstones (both known as Papa rock), and limestone but also on basalt. Usually in, or near seepages or on the margins of slow-flowing streams



Flowering on road-side mudstone bank; Junction Road, Kaiwi, Whanganui. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Date taken: 09/09/2018, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Flowering on road-side mudstone bank; Junction Road, Kaiwi, Whanganui. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Date taken: 09/09/2019, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Terrestrial, tuberous, glabrous, summer-green herb forming extensive colonies. **Tuberoids** globose to ellipsoid on extended roots. **Leaf** solitary, firm and fleshy, sessile; usually spreading and held flat to the ground surface; lamina 18–40 × 15–35 mm, blunt wedge-shaped to ovate-oblong, sometimes pandurate, apiculate at apex, with apiculus decurved, rounded and cordate at base; midrib slightly grooved above, flat beneath; leaf colour dull green above with purple flecks on margins, on midrib, or overall, silvery beneath. **Flowers** 1–(2), 10–15 mm long, generally green throughout except for labellum tube, dominated by the labellum, filiform petals and lateral sepals, on a usually purple streaked peduncle 3.0–5.0 × 1.5–2.0 mm. **Ovary** 5–8 × 2–4 mm, green, sometimes streaked with purple, curved, subtended by two unequal floral bracts, the smaller vestigial to 3 mm long, subulate, the larger 6–10 × 3–5 mm, narrowly ovate-lanceolate, green, equaling the ovary. **Dorsal sepal** 15–20 × 5–8 mm, exceeding the labellum, lanceolate in outline when flattened, concave, cucullate and arching over the labellum tube, with apex upturned; green, slightly diffused with purple on the veins. **Lateral sepals** 50–70 × 0.5–1.0 mm at widest point; filiform, greatly exceeding labellum; green, sometimes flecked with purple; suberect to erect and spreading; channelled, and twisted. **Petals** 40–60 × 0.5–1.0 mm at widest point, usually shorter than lateral sepals, filiform, greatly exceeding labellum, projecting forwards and outwards; channelled, auriculate at base of the column. **Auricles** short, projecting downwards and forwards, with apertures 1.0–1.5 mm across. **Labellum** usually green except for labellum tube and upper margins of lamina which are often purple-flushed or streaked; labellum tube 8–10 mm long, erect at first then doubly deflexed through 90°–180°, expanding into the lamina; lamina 6–8 × 8–10 mm, broadly ovate; upper margins folded inwards and overlapping; lower surface spreading, deflexed against ovary; rounded or obtuse with slightly erose margins and a median apiculus; inner surface with scattered minute papillae, veins ridged; throat of labellum tube notched, barely over half-way on lamina. **Column** 2.5–3.0 mm long, broadest and ridged at base, inclined backwards, minutely winged. **Stigma** scutiform, 0.7 mm diameter, concave. **Anther** 1 mm, obtuse. **Pollinia** 4, united in pairs, 0.6 × 0.4 mm, oblong, mealy, yellow. **Capsule** 10–16 × 4–6 mm, elliptic, initially green later brown, on greatly elongated peduncle.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

[Key to native orchids of New Zealand](#)

SIMILAR TAXA

Allied to *Corybas rivularis*, *C. papa* is distinguished from that species and indeed all other *Corybas* by the combination of sessile, bluntly wedge-shaped, usually spotted leaves; relatively small, predominantly green flowers; broad concave dorsal sepal; subequal petals and lateral sepals; doubly deflexed labellum spreading against the ovary, compressed front to back; and with a flared, rounded or obtuse, apiculate lamina.

FLOWERING

August–October

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Violet/Purple

FRUITING

October–January

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult—should not be removed from the wild.

ETYMOLOGY

corybas: Helmet flower

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Considerable research is underway to investigate the validity of the segregate genera split from *Corybas* R.Br. by Jones et al. (2002). Whilst much of that work has yet to be published, on advice from Australian Orchidologists Peter Weston and Stephen Hopper (pers. comm., July 2011, November 2014), all of the segregate genera recognised for New Zealand by Jones et al. (2002) are returned to *Corybas*.

Lehnebach (2016) made three combinations for those *Nematoceras* lacking valid names in *Corybas*. This action now enables the full transfer of *Nematoceras* back to *Corybas*. However, as of writing, a formal publication rejecting the segregation of *Corybas* by Jones et al. (2002) has yet to be published. Lehnebach cites an unpublished PhD (Lyon 2014) that indicates this move is imminent.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2007. Description based on Molloy and Irwin (1996).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

- Jones DL, Clements MA, Sharma IK, Mackenzie AM, Molloy BPJ. 2002. Nomenclatural notes arising from studies into the Tribe *Diurideae* (Orchidaceae). *The Orchadian* 13(10): 437–468.
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- Molloy BPJ, Irwin JB. 1996. Two new species of *Corybas* (Orchidaceae) from New Zealand, and taxonomic notes on *C. rivularis* and *C. orbiculatus*. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 34(1): 1–10.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.1996.10412686>.
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- Lyon SP. 2014. Molecular systematics, biogeography, and mycorrhizal associations in the Acianthinae (Orchidaceae), with a focus on the genus *Corybas*. PhD Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA.
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NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/corybas-papa/>

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