

Pterostylis alobula

COMMON NAMES

greenhood

BIOSTATUS

Native

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Terrestrial, colony forming, perennial herb. Plants at flowering up to 150 mm tall. **Stem** green or reddish-green, slender, terete, smooth; internodes rarely > leaves. **Petiolate leaves** in separate loose rosette or more or less loosely spaced up the lower part of flowering stem; petiole up to 10 mm long, initially distinct soon merging into leaf lamina on lower cauline leaves; leaf lamina 5–15 × 4–15 mm, dark green or green, broad-ovate, orbicular-cordate to trowel-shaped, apex acute to subacute, upper leaf surface smooth. **Cauline leaves** 2–6, mostly all sessile, 5–25 × 3–6 mm, dark green to green, linear to narrow-lanceolate or narrow-elliptic, uppermost slightly overtopping ovary. **Flower** 1–(2) erect, pale green and white striped. **Dorsal sepal** 20–25 mm tall, apex acuminate, usually horizontal. **Lateral sepals** diverging at a wide angle to form a V shape when viewed from the front, sinus smoothly rounded and not jugate in side view, tips long-caudate and much overtopping galea. **Petals** almost as long as dorsal sepal, with the exposed marginal strip of medium width, and often nearly horizontal. **Labellum** arched and protruding, basal portion lanceolate, gradually tapering to mid-length, then abruptly contracted; margins recurved such that distal third is linear in outline and deeply channelled beneath, apex bluntly truncate. **Column** shorter than labellum; stigma elliptic, slightly prominent.

SIMILAR TAXA

Most often confused with *Pterostylis trullifolia*, with which it often grows. From that species it is easily distinguished by the presence of loose rosettes, or their complete absence, and that the rosette leaves have smooth rather than embossed surfaces. The flowers of *P. alobula* are bigger and usually paler green coloured than *P. trullifolia*. The lateral sepals when in side view are smooth and rounded, lacking the jugate shape typical of *P. alveata*, *P. brumalis*, and *P. trullifolia*.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: Manawatāwhi / Three Kings Islands, Poor Knights Islands, North Island, South Island (in the east as far south as South Canterbury and the lower Waitaki Valley, and in the west as far south as Cape Foulwind), Chatham Islands.

HABITAT

Coastal to montane (up to 1100 m a.s.l.). Usually on the forest floor in sparse leaf litter, open clay pans under scrub or amongst mosses in semi-shaded successional forest. Occasional invades rough pasture and lawns bordering forest remnants. Often growing with *Pterostylis trullifolia*.



Longitudinal section of flower. Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 20/06/2011, Licence: CC BY.



Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 15/05/2007, Licence: CC BY.

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

DETAILED TAXONOMY

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Pterostylis alobula (Hatch) L.B.Moore

SYNONYMS

Pterostylis trullifolia var. *alobula* Hatch; *Pterostylis crypta* Nicholls *Diplodium alobulum* (Hatch) D.L.Jones, Molloy et M.A.Clem.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Jane et al. (2010) following a thorough rDNA (ITS) based analysis of the segregate genera erected for *Pterostylis* R.Br. by Szlachekto (2001) and Jones et al. (2002) found no support to continue their recognition. This view is followed here.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

ECOLOGY

FLOWERING

March–November

FRUITING

May–January

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Minute seeds are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult—should not be removed from the wild.

OTHER INFORMATION

PLANT OF THE MONTH

This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see [Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for July 2017](#) for the full story.

ETYMOLOGY

pterostylis: Winged column

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

NVS CODE

PTEALO

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = c.50$

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Janes JK, Duretto MF. 2010. A new classification for subtribe Pterostylidinae (Orchidaceae), reaffirming *Pterostylis* in the broad sense. *Australian Systematic Botany* 23: 260–269. <https://doi.org/10.1071/SB09052>.

Jones DL, Clements MA, Molloy BPJ. 2002. A Synopsis of the Subtribe *Pterostylidinae*. *Australian Orchid Research* 4: 129–146.

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

Szlachekto, D.L. 2001: Genera et Species Orchidalium 1. *Polish Botanical Journal* 46(1): 11–26.

Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001>.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970)

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pterostylis-alobula/>

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