

# Dracophyllum pronum

## COMMON NAMES

trailing neinei

## FAMILY

Ericaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Dracophyllum pronum* W.R.B.Oliv.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## NVS CODE

DRAPRO

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Low-growing sprawling reddish-green woody shrub with many small narrow leaves that are flattened on the upper surface inhabiting mountain areas of the South Island. Leaves to 11mm long, flattened, with tuft of hairs at base (lens needed). Flowers small, white, solitary, at end of twigs.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island.

## HABITAT

*Dracophyllum pronum* is a common species of montane to subalpine habitats in the South Island. In these habitats it is characteristically found on gentle to steep rocky slopes, ridgelines and along the bases of stable screes, also within subalpine shrubland, shrub-tussockland, herbfield, fellfield, bogs or tussock grassland.



Island saddle, November. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Island saddle, November. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Procumbent scrambling shrub or subshrub 10–250 mm tall. Branches decumbent to prostrate. Bark on old branches grey and smooth, sometimes with deep fissures in very old specimens, young stems reddish brown. Leaves spreading; lamina sheath 0.7–4.0 × 1.0–3.0 mm, shoulders tapering to rounded and margin membranous, ciliate. Lamina linear, 2.5–11.0 × 0.5–1.0 mm, adaxial surface flat, with a tuft of scabrid hairs at base; margins serrulate with 100–140 teeth per 10 mm; apex obtuse to acute. Inflorescence a sessile, terminal, solitary flower on lateral branchlets; shorter than leaves; inflorescence bract shorter than flower, coriaceous, ovate at base, 3.2–4.1 × 0.6–0.8 mm, margins serrulate; flower bract shorter than flower, 3.5–4.0 × 0.6–0.8 mm, foliose, ovate; margins serrulate. Sepals 1.7–4.5 × 1.4–1.6 mm, ovate–lanceolate, equal or longer than corolla tube; margins ciliate. Corolla white to light pink; corolla tube 2.5–4.0 × 1.5–1.8 mm, cylindrical; corolla lobes 1.0–2.0 × 1.0–2.0 mm, reflexed, ovate–triangular, apex inflexed, subacute; apical ridge present, adaxial surface papillate. Stamens inserted on corolla tube in the middle, filaments 0.5–1.0 mm long; anthers 0.8–1.0 mm long, included light yellow, oblong. Ovary ovate, 0.5–1.0 × 0.5–1.2 mm, apex round; nectary scales 0.5–0.8 × 0.5–0.7 mm, rectangular, apices retuse; style included, 1.0–1.5 mm long, glabrous; stigma capitate. Fruit light brown, 1.2–2.5 × 1.5–2.0 mm, oblong, glabrous, apex truncate. Seeds 0.46–0.5 mm long, yellowish brown, ovoid, testa slightly reticulate.

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Dracophyllum pronum* is recognised by the often scrambling growth habit, decumbent to prostrate stems; by the flat adaxial lamina surface; by the foliose flower bracts which are shorter than the corolla tube and furnished with a serrulate margin; and by the sepals which are equal to or longer than the corolla tube, and which have a prominent apical ridge on the corolla lobe. The nectary scales of *Dracophyllum pronum* are also distinctively retuse. Of the other procumbent *Dracophyllum* species, *D. pronum* is most often confused with *D. palustre*. From that species it differs by the shorter leaves (2.5–11.0 mm cf. 14.0–27.0 mm) and by the acute rather than triquetrous lamina apex. The inflorescence bracts of *D. pronum* is also diagnostically shorter than the flower (not like those of *D. palustre* equal in length), far narrower (0.6–0.8 mm cf. 1.5–2.0 mm) and with serrulate green rather than white margins. The corolla tube is also narrower (1.5–1.8 mm cf. 2.0–2.2 mm) and the apical ridge of the corolla lobes of *D. pronum* is absent in *D. palustre*.

## FLOWERING

December – April

## FLOWER COLOURS

White

## FRUITING

February - June

## LIFE CYCLE

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

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild. Don't be tempted - take photographs instead!

## ETYMOLOGY

**dracophyllum**: Dragon leaf, from its likeness to the dragon tree of the Canary Islands

## WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (4 April 2012). Description adapted from Venter (2009)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

- Venter, S. 2009: A taxonomic revision of the genus *Dracophyllum* Labill. (Ericaceae). Unpublished Phd Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington
- Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309

### **NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION**

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Dracophyllum pronum* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network.

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/dracophyllum-pronum/> (Date website was queried)

### **MORE INFORMATION**

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/dracophyllum-pronum/>

### **PDF DATE**

17 September 2024