

Dracophyllum longifolium

COMMON NAMES

inanga, inaka

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Erect grassy shrub with light grey bark and erect twigs bearing long narrow pointed leaves inhabiting the South Island and Subantarctic Islands. Leaves 4–14 cm long by 1–4 mm wide, widening to a sheath that encloses the stem which has a finely hairy margin (lens needed).

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Erect to spreading single-stemmed shrub or tree 1–12 m tall. **Bark** on old branches grey to blackish brown, finely to deeply fissured, young stems reddish brown. **Leaves** dimorphic. **Juvenile leaves** spirally arranged or crowded at tips of branches, erect to spreading; lamina sheath 9–20 × 5–11 mm, light green, shoulders tapering to truncate and margin ciliate in upper half; lamina 100.0–250.0 × 2.5–7.0 mm, linear-triangular to lanceolate; margins serrulate with 50–80 teeth per 10 mm. **Adult leaves** erect to spreading; lamina sheath 5–15 × 4–7 mm, light green, striate, shoulders rounded to auricled and margin membranous with the top half ciliate; lamina 40–232 × 1–6 mm, linear to linear-triangular, prominently striated; margins serrulate with 120–170 teeth per 10 mm; apex triquetrous. Inflorescence a terminal raceme on lateral branchlets, shorter than leaves, initially erect but drooping later, dense, 24–55 mm long, linear-oblong. **Inflorescence** bract over-topping flowers, subulate, 17.0–35.0 × 1.2–1.5 mm, scabrous at base of adaxial surface, margins serrulate. **Flowers** 5–18, pedicellate; flower bract caducous, equaling to longer than flower, 10–15 × 5–8 mm, broadly ovate, adaxial surface pubescent in upper third, margins ciliate; pedicel straight, 0.7–2.0 mm. **Sepals** 2.5–7.0 × 1.5–3.0 mm, ovate-lanceolate, equal to or longer than corolla tube, striate, surfaces glabrous with the top half sometimes pubescent on adaxial surface; margins ciliate. **Corolla** white; corolla tube 4.0–5.0 × 2.5–3.5 mm; cylindrical, widened at mouth; corolla lobes reflexed, 1.5–2.0 × 1.5–2.5 mm, ovate to ovate-triangular, shorter than corolla tube, inflexed at apex; apices subacute; adaxial surface papillate. **Stamens** inserted on corolla tube in the upper third, filaments 0.3–0.5 mm long; anthers included, 0.8–1.0 mm long, oblong, light yellow. **Ovary** 1.3–2.0 × 1.3–2.0 mm obovate, apex round; nectary scales 1.2–1.5 × 0.8–1.0 mm, rectangular, apices irregularly toothed; style included, 0.7–1.3 mm long, glabrous; stigma capitate. **Fruit** pedicellate, 3.5–3.6 × 3.8–4.0 mm, obovoid, light brown, apex round, glabrous. **Seeds** 0.8–1.2 mm long, ovoid, light brown, testa slightly reticulate.



Takitimu Mountains, Southland. Photographer: Jesse Bythell, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Mt Cook. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

SIMILAR TAXA

Dracophyllum longifolium is recognised by the very broad, long and flat juvenile leaves, stiff, narrow and erect adult leaves with wide, shouldered sheaths, flower bracts that fall early; sepals short and broad with long white cilia and the mouth of the corolla tube that is slightly widened. *Dracophyllum longifolium* var. *longifolium* is most similar to *D. cockayneanum* with which it is sympatric on the Auckland Islands and Campbell Island/Motu Ihupuku and from which it is distinguished by the glabrous juvenile and adult leaves. *Dracophyllum longifolium* has been erroneously reported from the North Island in the past by numerous botanists however, plants so referred are in fact *D. filifolium* a very different species. Despite the currently available names *Dracophyllum longifolium* var. *longifolium* has no close relationship to *D. septentrionale* (Venter 2009).

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura, Auckland Islands, and Campbell Island/Motu Ihupuku.

HABITAT

Widespread from sea level to the alpine zone growing in forest, woodland, shrubland and bogs on mountain and hill slopes, oncoastal cliffs and on bluffs.

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

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DETAILED TAXONOMY

FAMILY

Ericaceae

AUTHORITY

Dracophyllum longifolium (J.R.Forst. & G.Forst.) R.Br. ex Roem. & Schult.

SYNONYMS

None

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

ECOLOGY

FLOWERING

October–March

FRUITING

Throughout the year

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

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ETYMOLOGY

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

longifolium: Long leaved

NVS CODE

DRALVL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 26

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Venter S. 2009. A taxonomic revision of the genus *Dracophyllum* Labill. (Ericaceae). Unpublished Phd Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 25 June 2012. Description adapted from Venter (2009).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

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

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

28 February 2025