

# Earina autumnalis

## COMMON NAMES

Easter orchid, raupeka

## BIOSTATUS

Native

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

## FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Epiphytic or rupestral, rhizomatous, perennial, producing numerous leafy, unbranched, long persistent, wiry, cane-like stems up to 1.5 m long.

**Stems** erect if short, pendulous otherwise. **Rhizomes** extensive, much intertwined and firmly attached to substrate, fleshy, more or less spongy, initially creamy white maturing grey-white, thickly covered with sheathing scale-leaves or their weathered, fibrous remains. **Leaf-sheaths** closely imbricating, persistent, distichously arranged, 5–14 mm long, 3–4 mm diameter, cylindric to tubular, deeply split, scarcely flattened, each overlapping with and covering the lower  $\frac{1}{3}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$  of the leaf-sheath above, exposed surface pale grey with dark margins, weakly and diffusely maculate or not, spots if present orbicular, purple-black. Leaf-sheath junction with leaf lamina distinctly flared. **Leaves** weakly flexuose usually down-curved in upper portion; lamina persistent, disarticulating at leaf-sheath junction, weakly 1–3-nerved, 40–120 × 5–8 mm, mostly dark glossy green, broadly lanceolate, widest near base, tapering in upper third gradually to broad, subacute tip; lateral veins inconspicuous, midrib of upper lamina deeply and prominently channelled. **Inflorescence** a racemose panicle. **Panicle** up to 100 mm long, mostly stiffly erect, rather wiry; racemes numerous, arranged distichously at short intervals up the stiff central axis, each lateral stem to 10 mm long, usually bearing a few crowded, empty bracts and up to 3 sessile flowers. **Perianth** 13–16 mm diameter, opening widely (flaring), waxy white. **Sepals** elliptic, slightly keeled subacute. **Petals** slightly broader and more obtuse. **Labellum** broad and obtuse, white except for yellow base, standing erect and half enclosing the column, transversely rhomboid, not lobed; distal margins slightly thickened and recurved; base with two crescent-shaped ridges leading down to a small bright yellow or yellow-orange pit-like nectary. **Column** shorter than labellum, broadest at base, wings minute, present as small lobes about level with the stigma, pollinia clavate. **Capsules** elliptic-ovoid, ovoid, deeply, longitudinally grooved, dark green maturing grey.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Easily distinguished from *Earina aestivalis* Cheeseman and *E. mucronata* Lindl. by the virtually unspotted, more or less cylindric leaf-sheath; usually dark green leaves, stiffly erect inflorescences, and strongly pleasantly perfumed, consistently white flowers with broad yellow-based labella.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island, South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura



Mt Karioi, south of Raglan. Photographer: John Sawyer, Date taken: 01/07/2013, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Pukaha Mount Bruce. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 27/02/2016, Licence: CC BY.

## HABITAT

Coastal to montane. Epiphytic, rupestral or terrestrial. Mostly on the trunks and branches of forest trees but also on rocks, cliff faces, banks and fallen, moss covered logs.

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

## DETAILED TAXONOMY

### FAMILY

Orchidaceae

### AUTHORITY

*Earina autumnalis* (G.Forst.) Hook.f.

### SYNONYMS

*Epidendrum autumnale* Forst.f.; *Earina suaveolens* Lindl.; *Earina alba* Col.

### ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

### ENDEMIC GENUS

No

### ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## ECOLOGY

### FLOWERING

January–June

### FRUITING

April–August

### LIFE CYCLE

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

### PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown in a hanging basket in standard orchid mix. Often can be strapped to a tree trunk and provided it is kept moist during the drier months it grows readily. This species does best in semi-shade. The strongly perfumed flowers are especially attractive. Should not be removed from the wild.

## OTHER INFORMATION

### CULTIVATION

Occasionally available from specialist native plant nurseries.

### PLANT OF THE MONTH

This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see [Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for May 2007](#) for the full story.

### ETYMOLOGY

**earina**: Springtime

**autumnalis**: Autumn flowering

### MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

### NVS CODE

EARAUT

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 40

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

### 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.

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

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2007. Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970). Some of this factsheet information is derived from [Flora of New Zealand Online](#) and is used under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 New Zealand](#) licence.

### NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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### MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/earina-autumnalis/>

### PDF DATE

12 October 2024