

Calochilus herbaceus

COMMON NAME

copper beard orchid

SYNONYMS

New Zealand plants have been called *C. campestris* R.Br. another Australian species to which *C. herbaceus* is allied.

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Calochilus herbaceus Lindl.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 22$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: EF, SO, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: EF, SO, Sp

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: SO, EF, Sp

2004 | Threatened – Nationally Critical

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand, North Island. Formerly recorded from the Aranga Swamp near Maunganui Bluff. It is now known from a few scattered populations ranging from Te Paki south to Albany. Also present in Australia

HABITAT

A coastal and lowland species of open ground within gum land scrub, peat bogs, ephemeral wetlands and clay pans.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).



Lake Ohia. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 29/10/2008, Licence: CC BY.



In gumland scrub. Albany, Auckland. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 26/10/2008, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stout orchid 300-700 mm tall. Stem erect, glaucous green to green, fleshy, rather stout. Leaf fleshy, linear-lanceolate, glaucous-green to dark green, channelled, sheathing at base. Cauline bracts similar but much shorter. Inflorescence a raceme of (1-)2(-5) flowers. Floral bracts narrow, acute, overtopping ovary. Perianth green, glaucous-green to bright green except for the violet lamina and red cilia of labellum. Dorsal sepal 10-15 mm long, broad-elliptic, acute, somewhat folded about column; lateral sepals similar though smaller. Petals shorter, obliquely deltoid, apex subacute, directed toward dorsal sepal, green finely striped with red. Labellum violet, with a green apex, not much larger than sepals and petals; ligulate apex short, sinuous; disc broad with shorter, fewer processes; base bearing two, longitudinal metallic blue (rarely green) plate-like calli. Column wings with one distinct, dark gland or callus near base.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

SIMILAR TAXA

Immediately distinguished from *C. robertsonii* Benth., and *C. paludosus* R.Br., by the greenish-yellow flowers with red striped petals, a distinctive violet blue labellum, bearing red whisker like cilia.

FLOWERING

October – December

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Violet/Purple

FRUITING

October – February

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild.

THREATS

Habitat loss and plant collectors are the main threats to this attractive bearded orchid

ETYMOLOGY

calochilus: From Greek kalos (beautiful) and cheilos (lip), referring to the attractive labellum

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

CULTURAL USE/IMPORTANCE

New Zealand plants and some Australian populations differ slightly from *C. herbaceus* sens. str. and it is thought that they probably warrant separate taxonomic recognition (D.L. Jones pers. comm.).

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Moore, L.B.; Edgar, E. 1970: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. II. Government Printer, Wellington.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Calochilus herbaceus* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/calochilus-herbaceus/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/calochilus-herbaceus/>