

Prasophyllum hectorii

COMMON NAME

swamp leek orchid

SYNONYMS

Gastrodia hectorii Buchanan

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Prasophyllum hectorii (Buchanan) Molloy, D.L.Jones et M.A.Clem.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 42

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: PD

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: PD

2009 | At Risk – Relict | Qualifiers: CD, EF

2004 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North and Chatham Islands. Formerly known in the North Island from Te Pahi south to near Waiouru, and from one site on the main Chatham Island. Current records exist for Te Pahi, the Waikato and Central Volcanic Plateau.

HABITAT

Coastal to subalpine, in wetlands (0-1100m a.s.l.), and associated slow flowing streams. Usually found partially submerged in or at the margins of pools and streams, where the plants tubers may be seen floating just above the sediment. It is often associated with the sedge genera *Baumea* and *Eleocharis* (Cyperaceae) where it easily overlooked unless flowering.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).



Near Waiouru. Feb 2007. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Near Waiouru. Feb 2007. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stout orchid of wetlands. Plants sweetly scented, 0.15-1 m tall at flowering, Tuber ovoid usually paired with previous seasons tuber, roots few, stout, peg-like. Stem erect, fleshy, terete, dark green. Leaf solitary, usually overtopping raceme; lamina yellow-green to dark green, fleshy, terete, apex acute. Inflorescence a few to many flowered raceme. Flowers more or less evenly spaced, 10-80-flowered, fleshy-succulent. Perianth yellow, yellow-green to green. Dorsal sepal 6-8 mm, broad-ovate, concave; laterals somewhat longer, narrow-oblong, free to base, margins thin, apex often hooded, sometimes appearing bidentate. Petals slightly shorter, thinner. Labellum yellow, white or black, prominent, narrowed at base to a short, stout claw, ovate, sharply bent at a right angle halfway from base; margin undulate; callus confined to proximal tip. Lateral processes of column oblong, falcate, as tall as rostellum. Anther sessile, overtopped by rostellum. Stigma prominent.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

SIMILAR TAXA

A distinctive species with a very specific habitat requirement, such that it rarely grows with other orchid species. It could be confused with some forms of *Prasophyllum colensoi* Hook.f. that sometimes grow in wetlands but these are usually much shorter plants, with fewer reddish coloured flowers. The callus of the labellum in *P. colensoi* extends the whole length, almost to the apex, whereas that of *P. hectorii* is confined to the proximal part.

FLOWERING

(November -) December - February

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Yellow

FRUITING

November - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild

THREATS

This species has declined from most of its former coastal and lowland wetland haunts as a consequence of drainage, competition from weeds and on occasion excessive collection by botanists and plant collectors. Drainage is still the main threat to the majority of its remaining populations, several large ones of which are entirely on private land. Invasive weeds, particularly royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*) are a problem in the Waikato. Previously recorded as *Prasophyllum* aff. *patens* (AK 236408; New Zealand) by de Lange et al. (2004).

ETYMOLOGY

prasophyllum: From the Greek 'prasos' leek and phyllos 'leaf'

hectorii: Named after Sir James Hector, 19th century New Zealand geologist and botanist who was originally from Scotland

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Until recently *Prasophyllum hectorii* has been known in New Zealand as *P. patens* R.Br. which is an Australian endemic. New Zealand plants have also been referred to *P. suttonii* Rogers et B.Rees, another Australian endemic. Recent molecular and morphological studies, as yet unpublished suggest that the two New Zealand *Prasophyllum* will need placing in another, as yet undescribed new genus (Peter Weston *pers. comm.* November 2014)

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2007. Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

de Lange, P.J.; Norton, D.A.; Heenan, P.B.; Courtney, S.P.; Molloy, B.P.J.; Ogle, C.C.; Rance, B.D.; Johnson, P.N.; Hitchmough, R. 2004: Threatened and uncommon plants of New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 42: 45-76.

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

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/prasophyllum-hectorii/>