

Corybas dienemus

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, SO

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Red/Pink

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Terrestrial orchid up to 50 mm tall at flowering, occurring as solitary plants or forming small colonies. **Leaf** solitary, 15–25 mm diameter, orbicular, dark green above, paler beneath, pellucid, cupular and semi-erect at flowering, apex apiculate, lamina firmly fleshy to almost succulent. **Flower** solitary, pale green and red-purple, semi-erect, positioned within cordate base of leaf. **Dorsal sepal** linear-oblongate, acuminate, cucullate (hooded) over labellum tube; lateral sepals and petals filiform, long-acuminate, subequal, stiffly erect. **Labellum** tubular at base, strong V-shaped in transverse; lateral margins flared to incurved, distinctly irregularly crenate.

SIMILAR TAXA

This species had been confused with *C. macranthus* from which it is allopatric. The distinctive cupular leaves, and pale-green and red, semi-erect flowers held within the cordate leaf bases immediately distinguish it from all other *Corybas* species.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island and probably southern South Island, Macquarie Island. Very similar looking plants have also been collected from Campbell Island/Motu Ihupuku.

THREATS

Unknown. The largest population known so far occurs on Macquarie Island where it is believed to be secure but following its recent (2013) recognition from the southern North Island this species may be better treated as 'Data Deficient' until its full extent in New Zealand is determined. The sole confirmed New Zealand population is on a track side and so vulnerable to tracking maintenance and plant collectors.

GENUS

Corybas

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Corybas dienemus D.L.Jones



Southern Taranua Range. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 29/09/2007, Licence: CC BY.



Southern Taranua Range. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 29/09/2007, Licence: CC BY.

SYNONYMS

Corysanthes dienema (D.L.Jones) Szlach.; *Nematoceras dienemum* (D.L.Jones) D.L.Jones, M.A.Clem. et Molloy

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Considerable research is underway to investigate the validity of the segregate genera split from *Corybas* R.Br. by Jones et al. (2002). Whilst much of that work has yet to be published, on advice from Australian Orchidologists Peter Weston and Stephen Hopper (pers. comm., July 2011, November 2014), all of the segregate genera recognised for New Zealand by Jones et al. (2002) are returned to *Corybas* (see also Lyon 2014). Lehnbach (2016) made three combinations for those *Nematoceras* lacking valid names in *Corybas*. This action now enables the full transfer of *Nematoceras* back to *Corybas*. However, as of writing, a formal publication rejecting the segregation of *Corybas* by Jones et al. (2002) has yet to be published. Lehnbach cites an unpublished PhD (Lyon 2014) that indicates this move is imminent.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

November–January

FRUITING

December–April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult—should not be removed from the wild. Can be grown in basic orchid mix consists of 2 parts medium coarse sand, ideally clean river sand; 2 parts soil, humus or leaf-mould; 1 part weathered sawdust or rotting wood; 1 part granulated bark. Many *Corybas* thrive better if more leaf-mould is added, and the plants grown in 50–70% shade, in the cooler, darker end of the shade-house, in pots kept moist throughout the growing period.

ETYMOLOGY

corybas: Helmet flower

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: DP, TO

2012 | Data Deficient | Qualifiers: SO

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2004 | Range Restricted

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Jones DL. 1993. *Flora of Australia* 50: 572.

<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/env/pages/ea399fe6-5ae3-465d-8613-1c10e68a075f/files/flora-australia-50-oceanic-islands-2.pdf>

Jones DL, Clements MA, Sharma IK, Mackenzie AM, Molloy BPJ. 2002. Nomenclatural notes arising from studies into the Tribe *Diurideae* (Orchidaceae). *The Orchadian* 13(10): 437–468.

<https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/310769#page/5/mode/1up>.

Lehnbach C. 2016. New combinations and a replacement name for three New Zealand spider orchids (*Corybas*). *The New Zealand Native Orchid Journal* 139. 4–5.

Lyon SP. 2014. Molecular systematics, biogeography, and mycorrhizal associations in the Acianthinae (Orchidaceae), with a focus on the genus *Corybas*. PhD Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA.

<https://asset.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/UAXO3VHO6P7EH8Y/R/file-19145.pdf>.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (14 April 2007). Description modified from Jones (1993).

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/corybas-dienemus/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026