

# Caladenia variegata

## SYNONYMS

*Petalochilus variegatus* (Colenso) D.L.Jones et M.A.Clem.; *Petalochilus carneus* (R.Br.) D.L.Jones & M.A.Clem. aut. non. N.Z. authors, *Caladenia carnea* R.Br. auct. non. N.Z. authors

## FAMILY

Orchidaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Caladenia variegata* Colenso

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, Sp

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (Kaingaroa Plain (mainly in plantation forestry), Hawke's Bay, Wairarapa, Tararua Ranges and near Wellington), South Island (North-west Nelson, Southland), Stewart Island/Rakiura, Chatham Islands (common).

## HABITAT

In the North and South Islands a montane species found in areas above 600 m a.s.l. Usually in semi-decomposed leaf litter or peaty ground under tall forest. Locally common in *Pinus nigra* Arnold plantations. On the Chatham Islands it is found in lowland tarahinau (*Dracophyllum arboreum* Cockayne) forest, usually amongst leaf litter made up entirely of *Dracophyllum* leaves.



Sutherland Track, Aorangi, 27/11/04.  
Photographer: Eric Scanlen, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Wainuiomata Hill. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 02/12/2011, Licence: CC BY.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stout terrestrial orchid usually occurring at solitary plants sometimes as small colonies of up to 10. All parts finely but sparsely glandular hairy. **Leaf** solitary up to 300 × 4 mm, narrow-linear to linear-lanceolate, dark green to reddish-green. **Stem** erect, stout, up to 300 mm tall, dark red-green or red, sparsely eglandular-glandular hairy. **Floral bracts** 1–(2). **Flowers** 1–(2) up to 30 mm diameter, in lax racemes, perianth usually pink, rarely white, if pink often darker toward flower centre. **Dorsal sepal** erect, arching over column, more or less cucullate toward apex, externally green tinged, lateral sepals wide spreading to somewhat deflexed broadly elliptic, apex obtuse to broadly obtuse, apiculate. **Petals** elliptic to narrowly elliptic, apex sharply acute, often falcate. **Labellum** 3-lobed, externally pale pink flushed with white toward margins, internally pink or white, marked with transverse dark red bands, disc with 2 more or less equal lines of prominently stalked calli, stalks dark pink or white, callus heads spheroidal, globular to ellipsoid, bright yellow, lateral lobes deeply cut; mid-lobe narrowly triangular, slightly recurved, either white or pink or basally white or pink flushed yellow, margins crenulated, dark yellow, marginal calli either absent or with a single semi-flattened yellow callus on either side. **Column** erect to slightly recurved, externally surface bright green, covered with fine, pink glandular hairs, internally green with 5–8 dark red transverse, irregular bars, column wings distinctly broadening toward apex. **Anther** pink.

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Caladenia variegata* can be recognised by its stature (up to 300 mm tall), very dark stem and green ovary and large flowers. The flowers are usually pale pink (but they can be white) are either solitary or in pairs. The dorsal sepal is characteristically green tinged. The back of the column is externally bright green and is covered with pink glandular hairs, and internally green striped red. The anther is pink, the labellum and side lobes are striped dark red. The calli are bright yellow, prominently stipitate, ellipsoid to spheroidal, usually in two rows that occupy a median position down the labellum. The mid-lobe is white or basally white otherwise yellow with butter yellow crenulated margins, and toward the base there are either no or one marginal callus on either side. The lateral petals are distinctively sharply acute, falcate, while the sepals are obtuse, finely apiculate.

## FLOWERING

November–January

## FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White

## FRUITING

January–March

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult—should not be removed from the wild

## THREATS

*Caladenia variegata* would seem to be a rather sparsely distributed and naturally uncommon orchid. However, it is quite likely that the apparent rarity of this species is also in part due to its being overlooked for despite its colourful flowers it is not easily seen amongst the leaf litter in which it usually grows.

## ETYMOLOGY

**variegata**: From the Latin variagatus, referring to colours disposed in various irregular spaces

## WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

## TAXONOMIC NOTES

Jones et al. (2001) revived the genus *Petalochilus* R.S.Rogers (erected by Rogers (1924) for what has come to be viewed as a peloric state of *Caladenia* R.Br.—see Moore & Edgar (1970)) for a distinct clade of mostly New Zealand orchids that had usually been referred to as *Caladenia*. Subsequently Hopper et al. (2004) showed how the reorganisation of *Caladenia* by Jones et al. (2001) was unworkable and they recommended a return to *Caladenia* and the other allied Australian genera that had been recognised previously. Following discussion with S. Hopper and P. Weston (pers. comm., 2011, 2014) the treatment of Hopper et al. (2004) is preferred to that of Jones et al. (2001) and so followed here.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2007. Description based on Colenso (1885) and herbarium specimens and subsequently published in de Lange et al. (2007).

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Colenso W. 1885. A description of some newly-discovered and rare indigenous plants; being a further contribution towards the making known the botany of New Zealand. *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute* 17: 237–256.

de Lange P, Rolfe J, St George I, Sawyer J. 2007. Wild orchids of the lower North Island. Department of Conservation, Wellington, NZ. 194 p.

Hopper SD, Brown AP. 2004 Robert Brown's *Caladenia* revisited, including a revision of its sister genera *Cyanicula*, *Ericksonella* and *Pheladenia* (Caladeniinae: Orchidaceae). *Australian Systematic Botany* 17(2): 171–240.

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Moore LB, Edgar E. 1970. Flora of New Zealand, Volume II. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Monocotyledones except Gramineae. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 354 p.

Rogers RS. 1924. *Petalochilus*: a New Genus of New Zealand Orchids. *The Journal of Botany* 62: 65–67.

[https://archive.bsbi.org/Journal\\_of\\_Botany\\_1924.pdf](https://archive.bsbi.org/Journal_of_Botany_1924.pdf)

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/caladenia-variegata/>