

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

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/>