

Chiloglottis formicifera

COMMON NAME

ant orchid

SYNONYMS

Myrmechila formicifera (Fitzg.) D.L.Jones et M.A.Clem.

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Chiloglottis formicifera Fitzg.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Non-resident Native – Vagrant | Qualifiers: SO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Non-resident Native – Vagrant | Qualifiers: SO

2009 | Non-resident Native – Vagrant | Qualifiers: EW, SO

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

In New Zealand known from only one historic site near Kaitaia. Abundant in eastern Australia.

HABITAT

The sole New Zealand record came from under dense shrubland. In Australia this species is widespread though often sparsely distributed, and tends to grow near streams in deep drifts of leaf litter.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Terrestrial orchid forming dense colonies. **Leaves** up to 60 × 25 mm, dark green, ovate-lanceolate with undulose margins. **Flower stem** up to 100 mm tall, bearing a solitary, narrow, flower up to 20 mm diameter, segments mostly dark green with brownish markings, or brownish-green. **Perianth segments** up to 20 mm long. **Dorsal sepal** erect and incurved. **Lateral sepals** recurved in the upper two-thirds, divergent, apex not clavate. **Petals** either spreading or reflexed against ovary. **Labellum** up to 12 × 7 mm, trapeziform, greenish to purple-green; lamina callus ant-shaped, central, a band of pink to black glands extending from near the base of the lamina apex; basal transverse glands largest; the upper glands sessile. **Fruiting capsules** not seen in New Zealand.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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



SIMILAR TAXA

Most similar to *Chiloglottis trapeziformis* from which it differs by the leaf margins which are usually undulose rather than flat; mostly larger, greenish-brown to brown (rather than green) flower often with purple green tones to the labellum; obliquely erect to erect (rather than erect) rhomboid (rather than truncate to rhomboid) labellum with the callus extending to the labellum apex (rather than confined to the basal portion); much more prominent central ant-shaped lamina callus; and greater calli ornamentation either side of the central callus.

FLOWERING

September–November

FLOWER COLOURS

Brown, Green

FRUITING

Fruits apparently not formed in New Zealand

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown. Plants of Australian origin are held by some New Zealand specialists.

THREATS

The only known New Zealand occurrence was eliminated through a combination of habitat loss and over collection by an amateur botanist. Had it survived here it is doubtful if it would have set seed as its pollination vector is absent from New Zealand.

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Considerable controversy has surrounded the exact identity of the Kaitaia collections (see Scanlen 2003; de Lange et al. 2004)). de Lange et al. (2009, as *Myrmechila*) agreed with Scanlen (2003) that the Kaitaia collections are not *C. (Myrmechila) trapeziformis* but are correctly assigned to *C. (Myrmechila) formicifera*. Research by Miller & Clements (2014) has now shown that the segregate genera *Myrmechila* and *Simpliglottis* proposed by Szlachekto (2001) and Jones & Clements (2005) should be reduced to synonymy within *Chiloglottis*. Their treatment is followed here.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2007: Description adapted from Jones (1998) and Moore & Edgar (1970).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

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