

Corybas hypogaeus

SYNONYMS

Corysanthes hypogaea Colenso; *Nematoceras hypogaeum* (Colenso) Molloy, D.L.Jones et M.A.Clem.

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Corybas hypogaeus (Colenso) Lehnebach

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

NVS CODE

NEMHYP

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

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

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

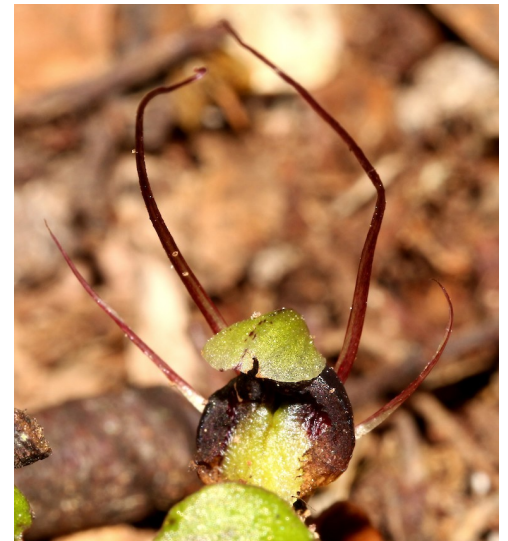
Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (Hunua Range, Waikato and Wairarapa), South Island (North-west Nelson).

HABITAT

Lowland to montane (up to 1000 m a.s.l.). In kānuka (*Kunzea* spp.)- or beech (*Nothofagaceae*)-dominated forest, and on the margins of swamps developed within such vegetation types. Usually found near the trunks of these trees, semi buried in deep drifts of semi-rotted leaves. The leaf is all that is usually exposed.



Wharekawa side of Hunua Range in ARC Reserve on 6/9/01. Photographer: Eric Scanlen, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Erua Forest Park, Horopito. Photographer: Bill Campbell, Date taken: 23/09/2019, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Diminutive, terrestrial, fleshy, late winter to early spring flowering perennial forming extensive colonies through vegetative extension. Plants buried within leaf-litter usually only with the leaf exposed. **Leaf** solitary, held well above flower, much veined, veins largely anastomosing with longitudinal dots in the interspaces; distinctly petiolate, petiole 10–15 mm long, white often pinkish, with a sheathing truncate bract at base; lamina membranous, shining, 11.5–18.4 mm diameter, light green above, midrib and marginal spots purple; silvery to purple-silvery below; cordate-reniform to weakly pandurate, trilobed at apex, middle lobe prolonged, acute, acuminate, side margins sinuate with a single notch on both sides near the sub-hastate base, auricles large, distant, blunt-ended. **Peduncle** short, 2.3–4.6 mm long, hyaline, white or pinkish opaque. **Floral bracts** two, unequal, set close to base of flower, smaller bract to the front of the peduncle, minute, linear, obtuse; the larger bract set to the back to the peduncle, ovate-oblong, obtuse. **Flower** solitary, 6.9–9.2 mm diameter. **Dorsal sepal** sub-obovate-spathulate, narrowest at base, rounded and slightly sinuate or subapiculate at apex rather finely veined, arching and closely clasping, green with a purple median line. **Lateral sepals** up to 15 mm long, hyaline or pinkish opaque, linear, acuminate, very narrow-filiform. **Petals** up to 9.2 mm long, hyaline or pinkish opaque, filiform, 9.2 mm long. **Labellum** short, auriculate at base, apex abruptly flared with rounded and incurved margins, basal portion bearing 2–3 deeply cut laciniae, otherwise deeply and jaggedly cut. **Fruit** narrowly ovoid to ellipsoid borne on greatly elongated peduncle arising well above leaf litter.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

SIMILAR TAXA

Allied to and distinguished from the rest of the *Corybas trilobus* Hook.f. complex by the tiny flower, which is usually found buried in the leaf litter, and by the distinctly jagged-edged, incurved labellum.

FLOWERING

August–September

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, Violet/Purple

FRUITING

September–December

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult—should not be removed from the wild. Can be grown in basic orchid mix consisting 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 when 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

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

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*.

Lehnebach (2016) made three combinations for those *Nematoceras* lacking valid names in *Corybas*. This action enabled 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. Lehnebach cites an unpublished PhD (Lyon 2014) that indicates this move is imminent.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2007. Description modified from Colenso (1884).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

- Colenso W. 1884. A further contribution towards making known the botany of New Zealand. *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute* 16: 325–363.
<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/periodicals/TPRSNZ1883-16.2.6.2.25>.
- Jones DL, Clements MA, Sharma IK, Mackenzie AM, Molloy BPJ. 2002. Nomenclatural notes arising from studies into the Tribe *Diurideae* (Orchidaceae). *The Orchadian* 13: 437–468.
<https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/310769#page/5/mode/1up>.
- Lehnebach 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>.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Corybas hypogaeus* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/corybas-hypogaeus/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

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