

Dracophyllum oliveri

FAMILY

Ericaceae

AUTHORITY

Dracophyllum oliveri Du Rietz

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

DRAOLI

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Erect grassy shrub with many erect twigs bearing long very narrow pointed leaves inhabiting the western South Island. Leaves 5-7.5cm long by 1.5-2mm wide, abruptly widening to a sheath that encloses the stem which has a finely hairy margin (lens needed). Flowers in small spike at tip of short branches.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (mostly westerly though extending east into Southland in the southern part of its range)

HABITAT

Dracophyllum oliveri is a species of open montane forest, woodland, shrubland or tussock grassland occurring on mountain slopes, gullies, plateaus and swampy depressions within an altitudinal range of 157–1,160 m. In the northern part of its range it is mostly found in dry wooded habitats but in the southern part of its range it is virtually confined to bogs.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).



Lake Monowai, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Dracophyllum oliveri, Kepler Track, Fiordland. Photographer: John Barkla, Date taken: 31/05/2020, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Erect to spreading single-stemmed small tree, 1–4 m tall. Bark on old branches dark grey to dark brown, finely fissured, young stems reddish brown. Leaves dimorphic. Juvenile leaves spirally arranged, spreading to recurved; lamina sheath 6.0–9.0 × 3.0–3.5 mm, yellowish to light green; shoulders rounded to truncate and margin ciliate in upper half; lamina linear-triangular, 75–85 × 1.3–1.5 mm; surfaces glabrous, margins serrulate with 60–80 teeth per 10 mm. Adult leaves crowded at tips of branches, spreading; lamina sheath 3.5–9.0 × 3.0–5.0 mm, membranous; shoulders rounded to auricled, margin ciliate or only the top half ciliate; lamina 30–75 × 0.6–2.0 mm, linear to linear-triangular; margins serrulate with 50–100 teeth per 10 mm; apex triquetrous and acute. Inflorescence a terminal raceme on lateral branchlets, shorter than leaves, erect, drooping later, dense, 17–24 mm long, oblong; inflorescence bract over-topping flowers, 0.6–20.0 × 0.8–1.2 mm, ovate-lanceolate; margins serrulate. Flowers 5–10, pedicellate; flower bract over-topping flowers, 3.0–5.5 × 2.0–3.5 mm, broadly ovate, with a tuft of scabrid hairs at base of adaxial surface; margins ciliate; pedicels straight, 0.3–0.5 mm. Sepals 3.0–6.0 × 1.3–5.5 mm, ovate to triangular, equaling corolla tube, adaxial surface with the top half pubescent; margins ciliate. Corolla white turning light yellow with age; corolla tube 3.0–6.0 × 2.0–2.5 mm, funnelform; corolla lobes spreading horizontally to reflexed, 1.5–2.0 × 1.5–2.0 mm, broadly triangular, shorter than corolla tube; apex inflexed, acute; adaxial surface papillate. Stamens inserted on corolla tube in upper third; filaments 0.5–0.7 mm long; anthers included, 0.6–0.8 mm long, oblong, light yellow. Ovary 1.4–1.5 × 1.3–1.5 mm, ovate, apex round; nectary scales rectangular, 1.0–1.3(–1.5) × 0.6–0.8 mm; apices retuse; style included, 1.3–1.7 mm long, glabrous; stigma five-lobed. Fruit 1.0–1.5 × 1.0–1.3 mm, obovoid, light to dark brown, apex round and glabrous. Seed 0.95–1.2 mm long, filiform, yellowish brown, with a slightly reticulated testa.

SIMILAR TAXA

Dracophyllum oliveri is recognised by the leaves which have 60–80 teeth per 10 mm on the lamina margin; by the clustered 5–10-flowered racemes borne on short lateral branches; by the 5–6 mm long sepals that are longer than the corolla tube and which have light coloured margins. *Dracophyllum oliveri* is most similar to *D. filifolium* from which it differs in the leaf, inflorescence and flower characters given above.

FLOWERING

November – March

FRUITING

January – June

LIFE CYCLE

Minute seeds are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult - should not be removed from the wild

ETYMOLOGY

dracophyllum: Dragon leaf, from its likeness to the dragon tree of the Canary Islands

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (6 June 2012). Description adapted from Venter (2009).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Venter, S. 2009: A taxonomic revision of the genus *Dracophyllum* Labill. (Ericaceae). Unpublished Phd Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington.

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/dracophyllum-oliveri/>