

Dracophyllum patens

COMMON NAME

Great Barrier Inaka

SYNONYMS

None (described in 1929)

FAMILY

Ericaceae

AUTHORITY

Dracophyllum patens W.R.B.Oliv.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

DRAPAT

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 26

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Brownish small shrub with erect twigs bearing untidy tufts of grass-like long narrow pointed leaves inhabiting upland areas of the Coromandel and Great Barrier Island. Leaves 30–75mm long by 2–6mm wide, surrounding stem at the base. Flowers arranged in a short spike, below the leaves.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand; North (Coromandel Peninsula (Maumaupaki, Table Mountain, upper Kauaeranga Valley, Pakirarahi, Hihi). and Great Barrier Islands

HABITAT

Confined to exposures of rhyolite, hydrothermally altered andesites, and dacite rock within montane cloud forest (above 300 m a.s.l.) and regenerating shrubland within that altitudinal zone. Very rarely in tall forest.



Dracophyllum patens at Pakirarahi (June).
Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence:
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Dracophyllum patens at Pakirarahi (June).
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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Sparingly branched, erect shrub up to 1.2 m tall (usually less). Mature bark grey, much marked by leaf abscission scars. Leaves often pinkish-green, to red-green, ascending at first, maturing patent and spreading; leaf sheath 8-10 x 3-4 mm with scarious margins, sheath narrowing to a thick subulate lamina, this 35.0-40.0 x 6.0-6.5 mm, broadly lanceolate, apex acute, with margins minutely serrulate. Leaves of juveniles less rigid; sheath to 15 mm long, lamina to 100 m. x 10 mm. Inflorescence terminal on lateral branchlets; racemose, 2-6-flowered, racemes subtended by a tuft of leaves. Lowest bracts foliose; sheath 3-4 mm long, shoulder ciliate, lamina ± 15 mm. long, ciliate, ± pubescent near sheath. Sepals broad, acute, sparingly ciliate. Corolla-tube c.4 mm long, white or pinkish white, subcampanulate. Style stout, c.2 mm long. Capsule more or less 2 mm diameter.

SIMILAR TAXA

Dracophyllum patens is most likely to be confused with *D. sinclairii* with which it sometimes grows. From *D. sinclairii*, *D. patens* is easily distinguished by its smaller stature (up to 1.5 m tall cf. up to 2.6 m tall), often pinkish-green to red-green leaves with broad sheaths and short, broad, lamina with acute rather than acuminate apices.

FLOWERING

Throughout the year

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White

FRUITING

Throughout the year

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild.

THREATS

Listed because it is a narrow range endemic . It is locally abundant in the places it has been reported from.

ETYMOLOGY

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

patens: Spreading

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (14 May 2006). Description adapted from Allan (1961)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H.H. 1961: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I. Government Printer, 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-patens/>