

Libertia flaccidifolia

SYNONYMS

None first described in 2009

FAMILY

Iridaceae

AUTHORITY

Libertia flaccidifolia Blanchon et J.S.Weaver

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Monocots

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 228

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: DP, OL

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: OL

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: OL, RF, RR

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North I. Mt Tamahunga near Warkworth.

HABITAT

Montane in mixed forest and shrub land where it is found in full sun or partial shaded situations growing on ridge lines, track sides, steep, dry clay banks, and at the base of rocks.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Plants consisting of closely bunched leafy fans, arising from short, much branched rhizomes. Leaves broad, flaccid, tips usually lying on ground, 500–960 × 7–14mm, green to yellow-green, slightly falcate, the 2 sides similar; leaf bases green to red-brown; veins numerous, median ones may be crowded to form a slight midrib; margins coarsely scabrid.

Inflorescences 400–720mm, often shorter than leaf tips at anthesis, but elongating during fruit development to reach at least 2/3 the length of the leaves; peduncles 1/5–2/5 the length of the inflorescence. Panicle broad, usually openly branched; lower bracts I (40–100 mm, green and lanceolate, upper bracts 15–40 mm and green-brown, occurring singly; 1–7 flowers per branch. Pedicels slender and delicate, glabrous, 10–20 mm long. Perianth bud often pigmented externally, usually longer than ovary at anthesis. Flowers 12–15mm diameter; tepals all white internally, inner tepals orbicular, unguiculate, usually overlapping outer tepals, cleft present at tips; outer tepals



Mount Tamahunga. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 17/10/2009, Licence: CC BY.



Mature capsule from previous season. Note orange, pitted seeds. Mount Tamahunga. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 17/10/2009, Licence: CC BY.

SIMILAR TAXA

This species is easily distinguished all other species of *Libertia* by its rather broad, distinctly scabrid, flaccid leaves, whose tips are characteristically tips drooping so as to touch the ground. Unusually the seeds of *Libertia flaccidiflora* are also yellow or yellow-orange, rather than the orange seeds typical of most other New Zealand *Libertia*. Another population of *Libertia* located closer to Warkworth approaches in *Libertia flaccidifolia* in several respects and requires further study.

FLOWERING

September–November

FLOWER COLOURS

White, Yellow

FRUITING

December–March

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and by the division of established plants. However, its exact cultivation requirements have yet to be determined.

THREATS

Libertia flaccidiflora appears to be a very uncommon, localised endemic which is known only from one site where there are three small populations totalling about 150 plants. In 1967 another population was destroyed when a meteorological microwave station was installed on the summit of Mt Tamahunga. All of the remaining plants are threatened by feral goats and possums which seriously browse plants. Browsing is so severe that recent surveys have found very few unbrowsed adults and almost no seedlings.

ETYMOLOGY

libertia: Named after Marie-Anne Libert, (1782-1865) born & died in Malmedy, province of Liège, Belgium; botanist and mycologist

flaccidifolia: Weak or drooping leaves

ATTRIBUTION

Description based on Blanchon et al. (2002).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Blanchon, D.J.; Weaver, J.S. 2009: *Libertia flaccidifolia* (Iridaceae), a new species from Mt Tamahunga, Northland, New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 47: 317–324.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/libertia-flaccidifolia/>