

Prasophyllum colensoi

COMMON NAME

leek orchid

SYNONYMS

Prasophyllum pauciflorum Col.

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Prasophyllum colensoi Hook.f.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

NVS CODE

PRACOL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 42$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North, South, Stewart, Chatham, Antipodes and Auckland Islands

HABITAT

Coastal to alpine in wetlands, gumland and subalpine scrub, successional forest, tussock grassland, herb and fellfield

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).



Northern Remutaka Range. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 10/01/2004, Licence: CC BY.



Waingawa River valley, Tararua Range. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 12/01/2008, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Terrestrial, tuberous, fleshy, glabrous, summer-green, perennial herb up to 300 mm tall when flowering. Tuber shortly ovoid, adjacent to or occasionally up to 10 mm away from previous seasons tuber. Stem erect, more or less smooth, terete, dark green basally tinged with red. Leaf shorter than or overtopping raceme; 100–300 mm long, dark green or reddish green, if dark green with base tinged red, terete, hollow, linear-lanceolate, apex acute. Inflorescence racemose. Raceme 5–20-flowered, flowers evenly spaced, or clumped together and more or less overlapping. Perianth green, yellowish-green, pale yellow, reddish-green to dark red or maroon, colours sometimes intermixed on the same plant. Dorsal sepal 5 mm long, ovate, concave, sometimes recurved; lateral sepals slightly longer, narrower, weakly fused in bud and usually remaining so at least near base, channelled, apex minutely cucullate, shortly apiculate, appearing bidentate. Petals a little shorter, wider, more delicate. Labellum of similar length, narrowed at base and almost sessile, occasionally shortly clawed, ovate, recurved but not abruptly so; margin entire, smooth to undulate; callus extending as an irregularly thickened median band almost to the narrowly subacute apex. Lateral processes of column bilobed, anterior lobe membranous and slightly shorter than anther; posterior lobe much smaller and more or less callus-like. Anther sessile, just overtopped by rostellum. Stigma barely its own height above column-base.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

Key to native orchids of New Zealand

SIMILAR TAXA

Could be confused with *Prasophyllum hectorii* (Buchanan) Molloy, D.L.Jones et M.A.Clem., which is a species of acidic wetlands where it usually grows partially submerged in water. *Prasophyllum colensoi* differs by its usually smaller size (up to 300 mm c.f up to 1 m tall in *P. hectorii*) and fewer, scarcely scented flowers (up to 20 cf. up to 80 in *P. hectorii*). The callus of the labellum in *P. colensoi* extends almost to the narrow apex; that of *P. hectorii* is more or less confined to the proximal portion, with the labellum apex wide, pale and mostly undulose.

FLOWERING

October - March

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Yellow

FRUITING

January - June

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown in a sunny, free draining soil. Excellent in pots. Should not be removed from the wild.

ETYMOLOGY

prasophyllum: From the Greek 'prasos' leek and phyllos 'leaf'

colensoi: Named after William Colenso (7 November 1811 - 10 February 1899) who was a Cornish Christian missionary to New Zealand, and also a printer, botanist, explorer and politician.

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Recent molecular and morphological studies, as yet unpublished suggest that the two New Zealand *Prasophyllum* will need placing in another, as yet undescribed new genus (Peter Weston *pers. comm.* November 2014) *Prasophyllum colensoi* is an aggregate species and at least two further, possibly unnamed entities warranting specific recognition could be separated from it. Forms found in Northland and on Great Barrier Island are especially distinctive.

ATTRIBUTION

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

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Moore, L.B.; Edgar, E. 1970: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. II. Government Printer, Wellington.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Prasophyllum colensoi* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network.

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

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/prasophyllum-colensoi/>