

Pterostylis graminea

COMMON NAME

grass-leaved greenhood

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Pterostylis graminea Hook.f.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

NVS CODE

PTEGRA

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 44

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island, South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura.

HABITAT

Coastal to montane (up to 1000 m a.s.l.) mainly in indigenous forest, also in gumland scrub, peat bogs and within the more fertile lag zone of wetland margins. A variable species which in the current broad sense adopted by the New Zealand Flora series has no clear habitat preferences.



Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 01/11/2003, Licence: CC BY.



South Makara, Wellington. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 06/11/1993, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Terrestrial, tuberous, glabrous, spring to summer-green perennial herb, mostly solitary or forming small patches of 3–5 plants through vegetative extension. Plant at flowering 10–330 mm tall. **Stem** erect, smooth, dark green, to reddish green, internodes < leaves. **Leaves** strictly erect, up to 4–6–(8), with entire margins, size changing from base to top of stem; the largest leaf on stem 80–150 × 5–10 mm, usually smaller, green to yellow-green, all linear-lanceolate, keeled with long-acuminate apices, widest near the sessile sheathing base, overtopping the flower. **Flower** solitary, usually tipping slightly forwards, small and delicate, front closely striped dark green and white, back of galea sparingly striped with green, mostly completely white. **Ovary** erect. **Dorsal sepal** 18–30 mm tall, erect then sharply horizontal, bearing few, widely spaced bands of green, the spacing of these widening toward rear to leave broad white bands or a completely white back; apex distinctly down-curved, acuminate to shortly caudate. **Lateral sepals** diverging at a narrow angle, initially erect, apex curved to the front of galea, acuminate, shortly caudate, overtopping galea. **Petals** broad almost to apex, a little shorter than dorsal sepal. **Labellum** basally red otherwise greenish-brown or green with a distinctly darker apex; lamina oblong to narrowly oblong, slightly arched and then bend forward smoothly and symmetrically between the lateral sepals, flat in cross-section, with midrib only slightly prominent, and grading from weakly to completely indiscernible toward apex, apex emarginate. **Column** more or less tall as the labellum; stigma narrow, scarcely distinguished from column.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

SIMILAR TAXA

An extremely variable species which probably encompasses a number of distinct entities worthy of taxonomic recognition at some level. *Pterostylis graminea* is most likely to be confused with *P. agathicola* D.L.Jones, Molloy et M.A.Clem., which is endemic to kauri (*Agathis australis* (D.Don.) Lindl.)-dominated forests and differs by its fewer, drooping to almost horizontal, rather than erect leaves, which rarely overtop the flower; by the much longer, attenuated dorsal sepal that arches upwards; and by the usually reddish labellum which has a prominent raised midrib and a pinched in, somewhat twisted rather than more or less flat and emarginate apex. A form found in North Island lowland peat bogs is very similar to *P. cernua* D.L.Jones, Molloy et M.A.Clem.

FLOWERING

September–January

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, White

FRUITING

October–April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult—should not be removed from the wild. Basic orchid mix consists 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. For *Pterostylis* shade of 50% and pots kept evenly moist.

ETYMOLOGY

pterostylis: Winged column

graminea: Grassy

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

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 LB, Edgar E. 1970. Flora of New Zealand, Volume II. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Monocotyledones except Gramineae. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 354 p.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pterostylis-graminea/>