

# Pterostylis micromega

## COMMON NAME

swamp greenhood

## SYNONYMS

*Pterostylis polyphylla* Colenso, *Pterostylis furcata* var. *micromega* (Hook.f.) Hatch

## FAMILY

Orchidaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Pterostylis micromega* Hook.f.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

## NVS CODE

PTEMIC

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 44

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: DP, EF, RR

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: DP, EF

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CD, DP, EF

2004 | Threatened – Nationally Critical

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (once known from Kaitaia to Wellington, the species is still present in the Huntly Basin, (Waikato), Volcanic Plateau, near Wanganui and in the Wairarapa), South Island (a plant was also known until recently from Knuckle Hill, North-west Nelson but it appears to have died out naturally), Chatham Islands (last reliably recorded in the late 1800s).

## HABITAT

Coastal, lowland to subalpine (0–1000 m a.s.l.). A plant of bogs, fens and swamps, ranging from acidic to eutrophic. It often forms colonies of 5–30 plants, ranging from large-leaved non-flowering juveniles through to flowering adults. It can be found growing under willows (*Salix* spp.).

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).



Opuatia Wetlands. Photographer: Gillian M. Crowcroft, Date taken: 01/12/1990, Licence: All rights reserved.



Close up frontal shot at National Park. Photographer: Eric Scanlen, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Orchid 150–380 mm tall. **Stem** smooth, lower internodes short, becoming progressively longer toward apex. **Basal leaves** usually in a somewhat loose rosette, though when in exposed conditions then a compact rosette; petiole 5–10 mm; lamina 35–50 mm, pale green to grey-green, broad-elliptic, subacute, margins often but not always finely undulate. **Upper leaves** sessile, ovate to narrowly ovate, channelled, and weakly keeled, becoming sheathing near flower, uppermost often reaching or just overtopping flower. **Flower** conspicuous, solitary, erect, perianth white or cream. **Dorsal sepal** green, 25–40 mm, arcuate, apex acuminate to shortly caudate, ascending to decurved. **Lateral sepals** green and white striped at base, diverging at a narrow angle, apex caudate, overtopping galea. **Petals** white, shorter than dorsal sepal, acuminate. **Labellum** red-brown, narrow-triangular, arched, markedly protruding, apex narrowly obtuse. **Column** much shorter than labellum; stigma narrow-oblong, flat.

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

## SIMILAR TAXA

A distinctive greenhood of wetland habitats whose broad-elliptic leaves usually arranged in a loose rosette, and usually with finely undulating almost crisped margins, and rather large, erect, whitish flower with long tapering, arcuate dorsal sepal immediately separate this greenhood from the other New Zealand *Pterostylis* species.

## FLOWERING

November–February

## FLOWER COLOURS

Green, White

## FRUITING

November–March

## 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.

## THREATS

Drainage of habitat; habitat invasion by weeds (in the Waikato royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*) seems to be the main weed threat); unrestricted wetland access by stock, and wild animals such as deer, pigs, and possums have proved to be a problem at some sites. Nevertheless this species requires some habitat disturbance to thrive, and soon succumbs if its habitat becomes too densely vegetated.

## ETYMOLOGY

**pterostylis**: Winged column

## WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

## CULTURAL USE/IMPORTANCE

This is one of a number of orchids that have successfully colonised habitats now dominated by exotic species. For example several populations in Waikato have been discovered thriving within the moss mounds developed under grey willow (*Salix cinerea*).

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared from NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 October 2003. Description subsequently published in de Lange et al. (2007).

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

de Lange P, Rolfe J, St George I, Sawyer J. 2007. Wild orchids of the lower North Island. Department of Conservation, Wellington, NZ. 194 p.

### **NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION**

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

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

### **MORE INFORMATION**

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