

Thelymitra xdentata

COMMON NAME

hybrid sun orchid

SYNONYMS

None (first described as species in 1969, shown to be a hybrid in 1998).

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Thelymitra xdentata L.B.Moore

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 45–46.

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (sporadic from Waikato to Wellington), South Island (along portions of the West Coast). Uncommon.

HABITAT

Coastal to montane areas (up to 800 m a.s.l.). In open shrubland, gumland vegetation, peat bogs and along ridge lines in mature forest. Always found in the vicinity of *Thelymitra longifolia* J.R.Forst. et G.Forst. and *T. pulchella* Hook.f.—the parents of this sporadically occurring hybrid.



Tararua Forest Park. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 23/12/2007, Licence: CC BY.



Tararua Forest Park. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 23/12/2007, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Robust terrestrial, tuberous, glabrous, spring to summer-green perennial herb, solitary or growing in small colonies of 4–10 plants arising through vegetative extension. Plants at flower up to 600 mm tall. **Stem** robust, fleshy, erect 2.5–4.8 mm diameter. **Leaf** firmly fleshy to subcoriaceous, rather thick, erect to suberect, 80–200 × 10–20 mm, shallowly channelled. **Inflorescence** a (1)–6-flowered raceme. **Flower** 10–15 mm diameter, segments usually blue, lavender or pink, petals, labellum and dorsal sepals prominently striped with dark blue. **Sepals and petals** subsimilar, broad, slightly obovate. **Labellum** oblong-obovate. **Column** erect 6.5–8.0 mm tall, blue, lavender or pink; post-anther lobe taller than anther, slightly or prominently cucullate, and usually tuberculate towards apex, basal portion to mid section dark red grading to yellow toward apex; column-arms thickened about nerve, flanged about the base with delicate pinkish lobes, teeth or fimbriae, that mostly extend down the front margin of the column-wing; the arms bent inwards such that the cilia meet just above anther apex; cilia copious, in globose clusters, initially pale yellow maturing brown with age.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

Key to native orchids of New Zealand

SIMILAR TAXA

Most like *Thelymitra pulchella* Hook.f. one of its parents, from which it differs by the inconspicuous rather than obvious, column-arm teeth that extend more or less down the front margin of the column-arm wing rather than elongate into branched fimbriae; and by the consistent presence of globose masses of yellow cilia. In *T. pulchella* the column arms may or may not be ciliate, and the yellow cilia are always sparse. Unlike *T. pulchella*, whose post-anther lobe rarely extended above the anther, *T. xdentata* has a prominent, hooded post-anther lobe that is consistently taller than the anther. *Thelymitra xdentata* is distinguished from other indigenous *Thelymitra* with striped flowers, by its failure to produce capsules following flowering because it is completely sterile.

FLOWERING

November–January

FLOWER COLOURS

Blue, Red/Pink

FRUITING

Seed not produced (sterile hybrid)

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Very easily grown in a sunny, well drained site. It can only be grown by vegetative means as it is sterile. Although easily cultivated, like all orchids it should not be removed from the wild.

THREATS

Not Threatened. A sterile hybrid, which is listed here only because in the New Zealand Flora Series (Flora Vol. 2, Moore & Edgar 1970) it was regarded as a species. Further it is likely to be found wherever its parent species are sympatric, and so cause confusion unless a description is provided.

ETYMOLOGY

thelymitra: Woman's hat

dentata: Toothed

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

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.

Rolfe JR, de Lange PJ. 2010. Illustrated guide to New Zealand sun orchids, *Thelymitra* (Orchidaceae). Jeremy Rolfe, Wellington, NZ. 57 p.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Thelymitra xdentata* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/thelymitra-dentata/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/thelymitra-dentata/>