



Caladenia variegata

Common Name(s):

None known

Current Threat Status (2012):

At Risk - Naturally Uncommon

Distribution:

Endemic. North, South and Chatham Islands. Exact distribution still poorly known. In the North Island it has been recorded from the Kaingaroa Plain (mainly in plantation forestry), Hawke's Bay, Wairarapa, Tararua Ranges and near Wellington. Reported from north-west Nelson.

Habitat:

In the North and South Islands a montane species found in areas above 600 m a.s.l. Usually in semi-decomposed leaf litter or peaty ground under tall forest. Locally common in *Pinus nigra* Arnold plantations. On the Chatham Islands it is found in lowland tarahinau (*Dracophyllum arboreum* Cockayne) forest, usually amongst leaf litter made up entirely of *Dracophyllum* leaves.

Features*:

Stout terrestrial orchid usually mostly occurring at solitary plants sometimes as small colonies of up to 10. All parts finely but sparsely glandular hairy. Leaf solitary up to 300 x 4 mm long, narrow-linear to linear-lanceolate, dark green to reddish-green. Stem erect, stout, up to 300 mm tall, dark red-green or red, sparsely eglandular-glandular hairy. Floral bracts 1(-2). Flowers 1 (-2) up to 30 mm diameter, in lax racemes, perianth usually pink, rarely white, if pink often darker toward flower centre. Dorsal sepal erect, arching over column, more or less cucullate toward apex, externally green tinged, lateral sepals wide spreading to somewhat deflexed broadly elliptic, apex obtuse to broadly obtuse, apiculate. Petals elliptic to narrowly elliptic, apex sharply acute, often falcate. Labellum 3-lobed, externally pale pink flushed with white toward margins, internally pink or white, marked with transverse dark red bands, disc with 2 more or less equal lines of prominently stalked calli, stalks dark pink or white, callus heads spheroidal, globular to ellipsoid, bright yellow, lateral lobes deeply cut; mid-lobe narrowly triangular, slightly recurved, either white or pink or basally white or pink flushed yellow, margins crenulated, dark yellow, marginal calli either absent or with a single semi-flattened yellow callus on either side. Column erect to slightly recurved, externally surface bright green, covered with fine, pink glandular hairs, internally green with 5-8 dark red transverse, irregular bars, column wings distinctly broadening toward apex. Anther pink

Flowering:

November - January

Fruiting:

January - March

Threats:

Caladenia variegata would seem to be a rather sparsely distributed and naturally uncommon orchid. However, it is quite likely that the apparent rarity of this species is also in part due to its being overlooked for despite its colourful flowers it is not easily seen amongst the leaf litter in which it usually grows.

*Attribution:

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2007. Description based on Colenso (1885) and herbarium specimens and subsequently published in de Lange et al. (2007).

References and further reading:

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

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For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=1109



Caption: Wainuiomata Hill. Dec 2011.

Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



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