



Thelymitra aemula

Common Name(s):

Gumland Sun Orchid

Current Threat Status (2012):

Not Threatened

Distribution:

Endemic. North Island from Te Pahi to about the northern Waikato

Habitat:

Favouring open clay pans, gumland scrub, or sparsely vegetated slopes in site where there once was, or still is kauri (*Agathis australis* (D. Don) Lindl.) forest. It may also colonise grassy verges along roadsides traversing kauri forest remnants and gumland scrub. This species responds well to periodic burning provided of course the former habitat had few or no fire-adapted weed species.

Features*:

Terrestrial, tuberous, robust, glabrous, late spring to early summer-green perennial herb, usually solitary or growing in small, diffuse colonies of 3-5 plants. Plants at flower up to 800 mm tall. Stem robust, fleshy, erect 2.5-3.5 mm diameter, dark reddish green. Leaf firmly fleshy to subcoriaceous, rather thick, erect to suberect, 80.0-260.0 x 3.5-10.0 mm, dark green, basally reddish, linear-lanceolate, channelled, prominently ridged, undersides smooth. Inflorescence a 3-10(-22)-flowered raceme. Bracts 2(-3), prominent, rather robust, short, sheathing, with divergent tips, dark reddish green. Ovary prominent, robust. Flower 10-18 mm diameter, closely spaced, segments pale mauve to dark sky blue. Sepals and petals subsimilar, oblong to ovate-oblong, apex obtuse or subacute. Labellum oblong-obovate. Column erect 4.8-5.6 mm tall, basally white grading through mauve to dark mauve, violet, or banded brown/dark violet near apex, apex yellow; post-anther lobe taller than anther, erect, smooth or minutely tuberculate on the back, margins denticulate, slightly recurved, yellow; side lobe scarcely evident, forward pointing, fleshy, yellow; column-arms laterally flattened, narrow, erect and upcurved (rarely horizontal), upper two-thirds fringed with numerous, thin, brush-like white cilia; the arms bent inwards such that the cilia meet above anther apex. Anther broadly ovoid, green, with a prominent long, narrowly tapered, acute apex. Stigma with a short, broad rostellum.

Flowering:

November - February

Fruiting:

December - April

Threats:

Not Threatened

*Attribution:

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2007. Description subsequently published in Rolfe & de Lange (2010).

References and further reading:

Rolfe, J.R.; de Lange, P.J. 2010: Illustrated guide to New Zealand sun orchids, *Thelymitra* (Orchidaceae). Jeremy Rolfe, Wellington.

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

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=1314



Caption: *Thelymitra aemula*

Photographer: Kevin Matthews



Caption: Kennedy Bay. November

Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth