



Thelymitra longifolia

Common Name(s):

White Sun Orchid

Current Threat Status (2012):

Not Threatened

Distribution:

Indigenous. Three Kings, North, South, Stewart, Chatham and Auckland Islands. Also on Norfolk Island.

Habitat:

Coastal to subalpine (up to 1200 m a.s.l.). Occupying a wide range of habitats from open ultramafic talus to dense forest. However, it is most common in shrublands. This species is extremely variable and it is likely that following taxonomic revision, a number of forms, some with distinct ecologies, may be formally segregated.

Features*:

Terrestrial, tuberous, glabrous, spring to summer-green perennial herb, either solitary or in dense colonies of 4-20 plants arising through vegetative extension. Plant at flower up to 1 m tall (usually much less). Leaf solitary, erect, suberect or trailing the ground, very fleshy to subcoriaceous, deeply to weakly channelled and prominently ribbed longitudinally, 50-380 x 10-40 mm, green, dark green, reddish-green, reddish brown or yellow-green, lanceolate to linear-lanceolate, base closely sheathing, margins, surface and apex often disfigured by black spots and sometimes by prominent dark orange-brown rust pustules. Flowering stem stiffly erect, rather wiry, green, reddish green to brownish green. Bracts 1-2(-3), foliaceous, closely-sheathing, fleshy, of similar colour to stem and leaf. Raceme bearing (1-)5(-20) scented or unscented flowers. Flowers 8-18 mm diameter, externally red-green to dark green, internally white or very pale pink, segments spreading, widely spreading or scarcely opening, dorsal sepal slightly broader than laterals. Petals and labellum alike, narrowly ovate, subacute. Column up to 8 mm long, erect, basally brown or white grading to dark brown to almost black toward apex; column arms terete, mostly bent inwards such that they are lying more or less under post-anther lobe; cilia abundant, floccose (like cotton) or coarsely ciliate, white or cream, short and crowded in globose masses; post anther lobe overtopping anther, dark and smooth above middle, and usually yellowish on the semi-circular cucullate apex.

Flowering:

September - February

Fruiting:

October - April

Threats:

Not Threatened

*Attribution:

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

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. 194pp.

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

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=1316



Caption: *Thelymitra longifolia*

Photographer: DoC



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