



Thelymitra pulchella

Common Name(s):

Striped Sun Orchid, Beautiful Sun Orchid

Current Threat Status (2012):

Not Threatened

Distribution:

Endemic. North, South, Stewart and Chatham Islands.

Habitat:

Widespread from coastal to montane areas (up to 800 m a.s.l.). Preferring open shrubland, clay plans and gumland vegetation, often in wetlands. Sometimes under mature kauri (*Agathis australis* (D. Don.) Lindl.) or along ridge lines in mature forest.

Features*:

Terrestrial, tuberous, glabrous, spring to summer-green perennial herb; found as solitary plants or growing in colonies of 4-many plants arising through vegetative extension. Plants at flower up to 800 mm tall. Stem robust, fleshy, erect, 2.5-4.8 mm diameter, yellow green to dark green (sometimes almost glaucous green). Leaf firmly fleshy to subcoriaceous, rather thick, erect to suberect, 80-240 x 6-20 mm, yellow-green, dark green to reddish green, channelled, deeply keeled and v-shaped in cross section. Bracts, 2-4, foliaceous, closely sheathing, broadly to narrowly lanceolate, of similar colour to stems and leaves. Inflorescence a (1-)6-14-flowered raceme. Flower 10-18 mm diameter, segments usually blue or pink, rarely white, petals usually prominently striped with dark blue, sepals less markedly so; sometimes segments pink or blue without stripes. Sepals and petals similar, broadly ovate, lateral sepals slight narrower than the rest. Labellum slightly obovate. Column erect 6-8 mm tall, dark blue, pink, mauve, or white; post-anther lobe variable, mostly shorter than or equal to anther height, rarely taller; margins variable, usually thickened, sometimes slightly to prominently incurved, or irregularly denticulate and often tuberculate; usually dark orange, red-brown or red in the upper portion with the distal margins usually yellow; column-arms usually higher than anther, flat, red-brown to red, variably ornamented within a single raceme or population; most commonly with the margins thinly membranous, basally coloured red, toothed or lobed (anteriorly, posteriorly or both), the upper teeth grading into branched fimbriae, these extending to the top of the arm, or plain without ornamentation, or plain grading into teeth, or plain grading into fimbriae; teeth and fimbriae red, orange, yellow or in gradations between these.

Flowering:

October - January

Fruiting:

December - April

Threats:

Not Threatened

***Attribution:**

Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970).

References and further reading:

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=1318



Caption: *Thelymitra pulchella* at Lake Ohia

Photographer: Bill Campbell



Caption: *Thelymitra pulchella*

Photographer: Kevin Matthews