



Calochilus herbaceus

Common Name(s):

copper beard orchid

Current Threat Status (2012):

Threatened - Nationally Critical

Distribution:

Indigenous. New Zealand, North Island. Formerly recorded from the Aranga Swamp near Maunganui Bluff. It is now known from a few scattered populations ranging from Te Pahi south to Albany. Also present in Australia

Habitat:

A coastal and lowland species of open ground within gum land scrub, peat bogs, ephemeral wetlands and clay pans.

Features*:

Stout orchid 300-700 mm tall. Stem erect, glaucous green to green, fleshy, rather stout. Leaf fleshy, linear-lanceolate, glaucous-green to dark green, channelled, sheathing at base. Cauline bracts similar but much shorter. Inflorescence a raceme of (1-)2(-5) flowers. Floral bracts narrow, acute, overtopping ovary. Perianth green, glaucous-green to bright green except for the violet lamina and red cilia of labellum. Dorsal sepal 10-15 mm long, broad-elliptic, acute, somewhat folded about column; lateral sepals similar though smaller. Petals shorter, obliquely deltoid, apex subacute, directed toward dorsal sepal, green finely striped with red. Labellum violet, with a green apex, not much larger than sepals and petals; ligulate apex short, sinuous; disc broad with shorter, fewer processes; base bearing two, longitudinal metallic blue (rarely green) plate-like calli. Column wings with one distinct, dark gland or callus near base.

Flowering:

October – December

Fruiting:

October – February

Threats:

Habitat loss and plant collectors are the main threats to this attractive bearded orchid

***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=2078



Caption: *Calochilus herbaceus*

Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



Caption: In gumland scrub. Nov 2008.

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