



Thelymitra colensoi

Common Name(s):

Colenso's sun orchid

Current Threat Status (2012):

Data Deficient

Distribution:

Endemic. Three Kings, North, South and Stewart Islands. Rather widespread and very common in northern New Zealand. Often on offshore islands.

Habitat:

Coastal to montane (up to 700 m a.s.l.). Usually in open ground, or on clay pans. Frequent in successional shrublands and open forest. Common in pine plantations. Together with members of the *T. longifolia* J.R.Forst. et G.Forst. agg, this is the most commonly encountered sun orchid on northern offshore islands. Frequently found growing with *T. pauciflora* R.Br.

Features*:

Terrestrial, tuberous, glabrous late winter to summer-green perennial herb. Leaf solitary, erect, to suberect, or trailing ground, fleshy, deeply channelled and keeled, prominently v-shaped in cross section, 80-300 x 3-6(-8) mm, dark or light green base, linear-lanceolate to lanceolate, apex acute, margins and upper and lower surfaces often spotted with rust, closely sheathing at base. Inflorescence racemose, 80-300 x 1-1.5(-2.5) mm, slender, straight, wiry, dark green, reddish green or yellow-green. Bracts 1-2(-3), 10-30 x 3-4 mm, linear to linear-lanceolate, closely sheathing, acute to acuminate, dark green or reddish green. Flowers 1-7, 10-15 mm diameter, pale blue, mauve to pink; only opening on very hot, still, sunny days, autogamous. Perianth segments 6-8 x 3-5 mm, concave, shortly apiculate; dorsal sepal lanceolate to ovate, obtuse to subacute; lateral sepals lanceolate to ovate, acute; petals broadly lanceolate to ovate, subacute; labellum elliptic to lanceolate, acute, slightly smaller than other segments. Column 3.5-4.2 x 2.0-2.5 mm, erect, pale blue to mauve; post anther lobe slightly cucullate and curved, usually dark brown to reddish-brown or red, apex bluntly entire, bright yellow; post anther lobe extension minute; axillary lobes absent; column arms converging, 0.5-0.8 mm long, bent sharply upwards near the middle at 90 degrees, each furnished with a subterminal tuft of sparse white cilia. Anther inserted above central column. Stigma situated at base of column.

Flowering:

July - December

Fruiting:

September - March

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.

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=2347



Caption: Whangarei. Oct 2009.

Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



Caption: Leaves are commonly infected by fungus. Whangarei. Oct 2009.

Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe