



Pterostylis tristis

Common Name(s):

None Known

Current Threat Status (2012):

At Risk - Declining

Distribution:

Endemic. North, South and Stewart Islands. In the North Island scarce being known from a few old gatherings made between the Rangipo Desert and Hawkes Bay. South Island east of the main ranges from North Canterbury south. Stewart Island, known from one old record.

Habitat:

Lowland to subalpine (confined to upper montane to subalpine in the North Island). A species of open ground, usually in short tussock grassland within intermontane basins, along river flats and terraces, and also in open ground within grey scrub. It may also grow within mainly exotic pastures and along roadside verges, in loose gravel or shingle, or within sparsely vegetated gaps amongst boulders.

Features*:

Diminutive orchid mainly of short tussock grassland. Plants rather stout, 20-100 mm tall when flowering. Stem more or less hidden by conspicuous leafy bracts. Rosette leaves fleshy to fleshy-coriaceous, numerous, these 5-15 x 3-10 mm; brown-green, dark to yellow-green, somewhat glaucous, rhombic, more or less alveolate, lamina tapering into a broadly winged petiole; cauline leaves similar but smaller and sheathing. Inflorescence a raceme of 1-6(-8) flowers, each partially enclosed within a sheathing floral bract; perianth green, greenish to brownish-green with pale stripes. Dorsal sepal 5-10 mm, broad, apiculate; lateral sepals slightly shorter, almost completely fused into a flat, apically bidentate lamina, this strongly deflexed in fully opened flowers. Petals shorter than dorsal sepal, the anterior minutely (but distinctly) denticulate. Labellum, short and squat, broadly obtuse, extended backwards into a smoothly rounded appendage with a low, somewhat thickened median ridge. Column short and broad; wings broader than long, ciliate over most of the free margins; stigma broadly ovate.

Flowering:

September - January

Fruiting:

October - April

Threats:

An easily overlooked orchid of mainly short tussock grasslands. Herbarium data suggests that it is naturally uncommon and biologically sparse. However, it is very easily overlooked. Plants have been found growing in pastures dominated by exotic grasses and also along roadside verges. In the North Island it needs to be surveyed for, as it the areas in which it was recorded retain plenty of suitable habitat and the species is probably still there. Over all the exact conservation status of this species requires a more critical field survey.

*Attribution:

Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (14 April 2007). Description based on Moore & Edgar (1970) (as *Pterostylis mutica*) and Colenso (1886) (as *P. tristis*).

References and further reading:

Colenso, W. 1886: A Description of some newly-discovered and rare Indigenous Plants: being a further Contribution towards the making known the Botany of New Zealand. *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute* 18: 256-287.

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Jones, D.L.; Molloy, B. P. J.; Clements, M. A. 1997: Six new species of *Pterostylis* R.Br. (Orchidaceae) from New Zealand. *The Orchadian* 12(6): 266-281.

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Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285-309

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For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=270



Caption: Brown form
Photographer: Eric Scanlen



Caption: Green form
Photographer: Eric Scanlen