



## *Pterostylis cernua*

### Common Name(s):

Westland Greenhood

### Current Threat Status (2012):

At Risk - Naturally Uncommon

### Distribution:

Endemic. South Island, West Coast in and around Hokitika, Kumara and Lake Mahinepua - exact distribution still to be determined as this species was only recognised and described as new in 1997.

### Habitat:

Lowland (10-40 m a.s.l.) in swampy ground, roadside drains, ditches, margins of peat lakes and fens in sites subject to periodic inundation. Also on poorly drained gley soils overlying infertile, poorly drained gravels stemming from past glacial outwash.

### Features\*:

Terrestrial greenhood orchid growing in small colonies of 1-8 plants. Plants dimorphic. Sterile plants 30-60 mm tall, 3-5-leaved; leaves 15-35 x 4-7 mm, dark green to yellow-green, elliptic to elliptic-lanceolate, margins entire or slightly irregular. Flowering plants 60-120 mm tall. Leaves 4-5, 20-65 x 5-7 mm, cauline, erect to spreading; narrowly lanceolate, dark green to yellow-green, sessile, sheathing at base; margins entire; apex acuminate. Pedicel 10-20 mm long, slender. Ovary 9-12 mm, asymmetric, ribbed. Flower solitary, 14-18 mm long, semi-nodding, translucent white and dark green with red-brown suffusions toward galea apex and on lateral sepals; galea erect and gibbous at the base then leaning forwards before decurving in a shallow curve to the apex, the dorsal sepal ovate-lanceolate in outline then flattened, 25-28 x 11-13 mm, expanded in the proximal third then sharply narrowed, gradually tapering to the acuminate apex. Lateral sepals erect, loosely embracing galea, leaving a narrow gap to petal margins; conjoined portion 5-7 x 6-7 mm at top, narrowed to 2 mm wide at base, margins inrolled toward apex and tapered into the free points; free points 13-15 mm long, filiform, curved forwards, tips protruding over galea. Petals 17-20 x 3-4 mm, green with a narrow white central area towards the base, apex reddish-brown; obliquely oblong-lanceolate, falcate, acute, flange vestigial. Labellum erect, curved forwards distally, the apex protruding through the sinus in the set position; lamina 7-8 x 2-2.5 mm, dark green with a black-green central callus, narrowly obovate, apex subobtusely, labellum hinge ligulate 3 x 2 mm. Capsules ellipsoid, deeply grooved, yellow-brown to green-brown prior to dehiscence.

### Flowering:

November - January

### Fruiting:

December - April

### Threats:

The type locality is under constant threat from road maintenance and widening. Plants at this site are also at risk from weka predation (the birds plough up plants and eat the orchid tubers). Aside from the extreme vulnerability at this site *P. cernua* seems secure at the other sites in which it has been found. It is intensively monitored at the most of the known populations and more plants and locations are being discovered each season. These results suggest it is a biologically sparse, potentially widespread and easily overlooked plant. The declines happening at the type locality seem the exception rather than the rule for the species.

### \*Attribution:

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2007. Description based on Jones et al. (1997).

### References and further reading:

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.

### For more information, visit:

[http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora\\_details.asp?ID=309](http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=309)



**Caption:** *Pterostylis cernua*

**Photographer:** Phil Knightbridge



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