



Thelymitra formosa

Common Name(s):

Sun Orchid

Current Threat Status (2012):

At Risk - Naturally Uncommon

Distribution:

Endemic. North, South and Stewart Islands

Habitat:

Mainly found in lowland to montane wetlands, scrub and open forest. Occasionally colonises roadside banks.

Features*:

Very stout, robust, usually solitary (sometimes colonial) orchid which at flowering is up to 0.8 m tall. Stem dark red-green or dark green (sometimes glaucous) stout, smooth. Leaf 100-400 x 10-20 mm, linear-lanceolate to lanceolate, usually dark green to red-green, channelled and finely ridged, rather fleshy (almost succulent) and thick, sheathing high up stem. Inflorescences 10-15-flowered. Perianth 9-13 mm long, light to dark blue, without stripes or spots. Sepals, petals and labellum similar, all narrowly-obovate. Column-arms flattened, more or less channelled, with yellow or orange fringes and cilia arising from margins, each arm projecting from inner face of side lobule, usually standing much taller than anther; post anther lobe shorter than anther, erect, margins yellowish red and more or less thickened into finger-like callii; side lobules taller than anther, pinkish or yellowish, fleshy, with subulate erect projections on margins and with similar or more elongated tubercles across the surface.

Flowering:

November - January

Fruiting:

December - March

Threats:

An apparently naturally uncommon, biologically sparse species. Based on old herbarium specimens it does not appear to have ever been common at any particular location.

*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.

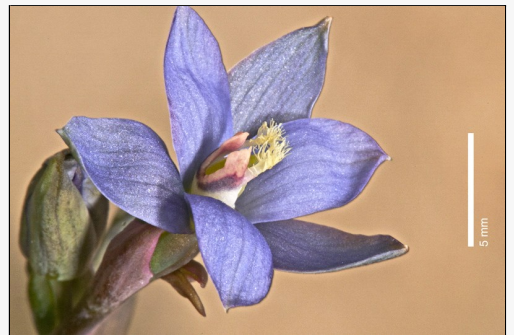
For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=326



Caption: Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt.
Dec 2011.

Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



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