



Thelymitra tholiformis

Common Name(s):

Domed Sun Orchid

Current Threat Status (2012):

Not Threatened

Distribution:

Endemic. North Island only from Te Pahi south to the northern Waikato.

Habitat:

A species favouring open clay pans, gumland scrub, or sparsely vegetated slopes in site where there once was, or still is kauri (*Agathis australis* (D. Don) Lindl.) forest. It may also colonise grassy verges along roadsides traversing kauri forest remnants and gumland scrub. This species responds well to periodic burning provided of course the former habitat had few or no fire-adapted weed species.

Features*:

Stout plants either solitary or forming colonies, up to 0.6 m tall at flowering. Leaf up to 360 x 15 mm, green, often reddish-green near margins and base, linear-lanceolate, sub-erect, shallowly concave with exterior ridges on mature plants. Basal sheath up to 30 mm long, pale, truncate, mucronate; stem bracts 2, 20-90 x 3-6 mm, lanceolate, sheathing in basal half to two thirds. Floral bracts 10-20 x 3-6 mm, lanceolate. Inflorescence 1-15-flowered, flowers 10-15 mm diameter, pale to strong mauve, on short pedicels. Perianth cupped, parts ovate, apiculate, up to 12 x 5 mm; sepals narrower than petals; petals minutely papillate externally. Column 5 mm tall, erect, concave in side view, pale purple with yellow striae and a narrow purple band near top. Post anther lobe as high as or exceeding anther, tholiform (dome-shaped) not hooded (cucullate), bright yellow, margin irregularly denticulate. Column arms more or less terete, horizontal or upturned, with short, dense, globose tufts of white cilia. Anther erect, apex pointed, sometimes curving forward. Stigma short, broad, more or less concave, bilobed; rostellum orbicular, very prominent. Capsule 10-15 x 5-7 mm, elliptic, green.

Flowering:

(October-) November (-
December)

Fruiting:

October -
February

Threats:

Habitat loss and plant collectors. This species is usually associated with kauri forest remnants and gumland. In gumland it is very vulnerable to habitat modification and from competition by weed species. Fires seem to temporarily benefit this orchid which increases in abundance soon after a fire. Some populations near to Auckland have been seriously damaged by plant collectors. Despite these losses, over all the species appears to be much common than was once thought, having an apparently naturally sparse distribution.

***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=327



Caption: *Thelymitra tholiformis*
Photographer: Ian St George



Caption: Close up - frontal image
Photographer: Eric Scanlen