

NEW ZEALAND NATIVE ORCHID JOURNAL



August 2025 Number 178

Contents

No 178 August 2025 ISSN 1177-4401



Cover: *Corybas acuminatus*, West Coast—Archer Tarn

Orchids in 3D: *Corybas acuminatus*,
Fairy Falls—Eric Scanlen

3 From the Chair: Gael Donaghy

Original Papers

- 10 Introducing our Regional
Contacts
- 14 Genus: *Pterostylis*
- 17 What's wrong with common
names?

Notes

- 4 Event: 2025 AGM and Field
Days
- 8 Event: Allan Herbarium visit
- 19 Event: Ngā Tapuwāe o Townson
- 22 Upcoming Events



Back Cover: 2025-2026 Subscription
increase

New Zealand Native Orchid Group

Chair: Gael Donaghy, GaelDonaghy@gmail.com.

Deputy Chair: Bill Campbell, jccampbell@xtra.co.nz.

Secretary & Treasurer: Pam Shearer, pam@insidetrack.co.nz.

Membership secretary: Melanie Brigden, meanieb1@gmail.com.

Webmaster: Bill Campbell, jccampbell@xtra.co.nz.

Editor: Cara-Lisa Schloots, caralisa95@gmail.com.

The New Zealand Native Orchid Journal: Our main aim is to improve knowledge of NZ native orchids, so we allow others to republish material published here, provided the source and author are acknowledged. The editor and members may not share authors' views. Published quarterly from February—deadline first of the month preceding.

From the Chair: Gael Donaghy



Kia ora tatou

As I think of what to write about on a terribly windy, wet and cold day, orchid hunting is not on my mind! Instead I am thinking

about the emails I have

received recently from Germany and the USA. The one from Germany comes through an order for a Pocket Guide, and the one from an orchid grower in California who wants me to send him some native orchids! The former entails a trip to the Post Shop to get a quote for sending a Pocket Guide to Germany, and the latter will require me to say NO. I have already had an email exchange pointing out that I can't collect orchids from the wild and no garden centre in NZ has them for sale, and they won't survive the trip or the California climate. I recently had a lovely exchange of emails, starting with a request for a Pocket Guide, from Canada, which resulted in an invitation to visit Canada to go orchid hunting! I have sold about 400 Pocket Guides, and a scattering of other publications over the past 7 years, so I guess it averages about one posting per week, but with most sent out from September until February.

All of this preamble is to give you some background of what the role of the "publications poster" (i.e. PP) for NZNOG entails. I have been this person for the last seven years and have really enjoyed it. I am

stepping down as Chair at the AGM this year, and would like to hand on this role as well. It is separate from the Chair role, so don't worry that you might be press-ganged into standing for Chair if you put your name forward. It is not a problem if you can't go to the AGM, as you can put your name forward and be seconded and elected / confirmed *in absentia* at the meeting. I would like to hear from anyone who may be interested in contributing to NZNOG by fulfilling this role.

This role would ideally suit some-one who:

- likes corresponding with native orchid people in NZ and around the world
- lives near a Post Shop
- has a scanner for scanning postal receipts and getting the cost reimbursed from the Treasurer.

AGM and Field Days

Thank you to the people who have indicated they are coming to this event. See the up-dated notice on [page 4](#) of this journal.

We don't yet have a quorum for the AGM, so please consider coming for the weekend. I would love to hear from you!

2025 AGM and Field Days

17—20 October 2025

Ōtorohanga



Venue: We will be based in Ōtorohanga, in the south Waikato. There is really good limestone country to the west of here, which is always good for orchids. NZNOG last visited this area about 2010, when we stayed at Te Kauri Lodge.

Accommodation: I have arranged with the Ōtorohanga Kiwi Holiday park for a 10% discount for you. To get the discount when you book use the “promo code ORCHID” on the website www.kiwiholidaypark.co.nz. They have a range of free-standing cabins, and also a large Park House with 5 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms, kitchen and lounge accommodation (sleeps up to 13 people). We would need to get together to organise this, but you can book independently for the free-standing accommodation. There are other motels available in Ōtorohanga as well.

Activities:

Friday 17th Oct: Meet for dinner at the Ōtorohanga Club (if we have enough RSA members to get us in).

Saturday 18th Oct: Field trip 1, 9am. Venue to be decided closer to the time.

AGM, 4.30 - 6.30pm, The Business Collective, 12 Hinewai Street, Ōtorohanga. Followed by dinner at the Ōtorohanga Club.

Sunday 19th Oct: Field trip 2. Venue to be decided closer to the time. Dinner at the Ōtorohanga Club.

Monday 20th Oct: Pack up from accommodation. Field trip for those who want to continue. Bill Campbell is leading a walk up the Waihāhā Stream from Western Bay Road (the road that goes south on the western side of Lake Taupō). There have been *Pterostylis nutans*, *Caladenia atradenia* and *Drymoanthus flavus* recorded from this track.

Contact Gael on nativeorchids@gmail.com with any questions, or if you are interested in a shared booking for the Park House.

The inbox

Caladenias on the NZNOG field days

30 November & 1 December 2024

Ian St George



Caladenia "redstem", Puffer track



Caladenia "redstem"



Caladenia chlorostyla Wainuiomata Ridge Track and Smith's Creek Track.



Caladenia "redstem" and... what?
Smith's Creek Track.
[All iPhone shots]



Allan Herbarium visit

Saturday 6 September 13:30

Lincoln, Canterbury

Visit to native orchid collection at Allan Herbarium

A unique chance for New Zealand Native Orchid Group members to view an astounding native orchid herbarium collection.

The Allan Herbarium at Lincoln holds around 6000 preserved orchid specimens. The oldest is *Earina mucronata* collected by Joseph Banks in 1769.

We will arrange an optional early lunch locally, followed by a two hour tour starting at 13:30.

Our host will be Dr Ines Schonberger, Collection Manager.

Our focus on orchids will be in the context of the herbarium as a whole.

See how the field work of botanists and enthusiasts in the past is used by researchers today. We will also learn how plants are preserved for scientific study.

Murray Dawson's work on the identification key for New Zealand orchids is part of the ongoing value of the collection.

Max Hill says he is roughly half way through digitising all the orchids. He hopes to finish that task by Christmas.

Gordon Sylvester, who was our group mapping coordinator till iNaturalist came along, is updating our databases from records in the herbarium.

He checks identifications of old and new arrivals.

This is a really special opportunity, it is worth making an effort to attend!

The Allan Herbarium is at Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research, 54 Gerald St, Lincoln, about 20 km south of Christchurch. Further communications will be on the Facebook page or if that doesn't suit you, email Melanie at meanieb1@gmail.com.

The inbox

Drymoanthus adversus



Archer Tarn

September 2024 | West Coast

Introducing our regional contacts

Finding and identifying native orchids in your local area, or on your travels, is great fun when you can link up with a regional contact person.

The NZNOG's main resources are

- the Field Guide
- our Facebook page "New Zealand Native Orchid Group Members"
- lots of activity on iNaturalist
- and real humans

The NZNOG encourages us to share our local knowledge. We try to have one or two key people in each region who assist by email, phone, and even by leading day and weekend trips. Some promote native orchids by giving talks and walks to other clubs and groups but such a commitment of energy is not expected.

These are our core regional contacts as of August 2025. You can request their contact details by emailing nznativeorchidgroup@gmail.com.

Northland – Bill Campbell is an excellent botanist involved in many groups with an interest in the native flora of Aotearoa. He seems to spend a great deal of time out and about finding spectacular and often rare orchids.

Waikato – Alasdair Nicoll lives 20 km south of Hamilton. "I use Te Kauri Scenic Reserve near Kawhia as a starting point depending on the time of year. I have taken people to Kaimai Range, Hakarimata Range, Pirongia Mountain and down as far as Taupō and Mōkau."

Alasdair says: "I have created displays in New Plymouth and Hamilton at the NZ Orchid Councils National Shows on behalf of the Group. I am happy to forward the display material to anyone that wants to run one in their local area. I also have brochure holders and the word documents for joining and information brochures."

Coromandel – Indy Marshall is an aspiring amateur conservationist, botanist, and orchidologist, and is one of the group's most enthusiastic members [*although one could argue that all members of the NZNOG are equally enthusiastic, just perhaps lacking the same youthful energy—Ed.*]. He is always keen to be part of any form of botanical adventure. While still a highschooler, Indy tries to spend as much as possi-

ble of his free time botanising, convincing his parents to drive him to new locations. As Indy is unable to get his licence yet, he most likely will only be able to meet up on the weekends, or school holidays and organise travel with his family.

Bay of Plenty - Gael Donaghy and Graeme Jane have contributed immensely to the NZNOG. Their wealth of knowledge of our native flora is incredible and you will no doubt learn many new and interesting things from spending any amount of time with them.

Marlborough / Nelson – Mark Moorhouse, his daughter Kendyll, and Trevor Lupton cover the top of the south from Murchison and Nelson Lakes north, including Marlborough, with peak orchid season from late August to mid December.

Having organised numerous trips, Mark says “study any distribution maps. Read and absorb what habitats our orchids can grow in. Spend quality time searching more intensely in sites that match. Never neglect tracksides they often artificially provide ideal light and growing conditions.”

Canterbury – Max Hill and Gordon Sylvester are both avid orchid enthusiasts with vast local and historical knowledge. Both are incredibly keen and often head out to fantastic locations such as Arthur’s Pass or further afield to the West Coast.

Westland south - Rachel Taylor, of Hokitika says “I’m sometimes roaming into South Westland, even as far as Haast so as far south as needed is fine.” Rachel regularly roams east too so she is well worth contacting if you have time in Bealey / Arthurs Pass / Otira.

Westland north – Kirsty Williams based north of Westport will be playing an important part in our upcoming Ngā Tapuwāe o Townson field days.

Southland—at present the regional contact is Gael Donaghy based in the Bay of Plenty, meaning we are looking for a locally based Southland regional contact!

Rakiura/Stewart Island – Peter Tait is not a volunteer, for his family has an island tours business. But as Peter says “orchids are a significant part of what we enjoy with our guests and sharing what we know”. So let’s count him in.

Thank you to members who have recently stepped aside from the role. Around the motu, these were some of the first to get the concept up and rolling:

Ian St George in Wellington/ Wairarapa

Kathy Warburton in Otago

Trevor Lupton in Gisborne

Claire Francis in Taranaki

Mike Lusk in Havelock North

John Rugis in Auckland

Murray Dawson in Canterbury

That's a segue into observing that yes we do have some gaps to fill. Gael is keen to talk with members who might be interested in covering those areas.

▼ *Corybas cheesemanii*



The inbox



◀ West Coast
Corybas hatchii
flowering in
September 2024,
captured by Archer
Tarn.

Iwitahi Working Bee & Native Orchid Weekend

Friday, December 5th - Sunday, December 7th

At the Iwitahi Reserve off SH5 (Napier - Taupo)



Starts Friday after 4pm
Ends Sunday Lunchtimeish



Includes Meals and 2 Nights' Accommodation at Sika Lodge
(bunk room style)

Light /Moderate Track Maintenance, Weeding etc.
Orchid Identification, Photography, And Discussions On Site

\$120+ / -PP

[THE MORE THAT COME](#)
[THE CHEAPER IT GETS](#)

We would expect to see *Calochilus*, *Chiloglottis*, *Gastrodia*,
Thelymitra and *Pterostylis* species in flower or bud

If you are unable to attend for the full weekend but would like to join us at the reserve or prefer to organise your own accommodation, please let me know so we can keep an eye out for you

To register your interest, contact me by FB Messenger me or email - tobymarris@hotmail.com



Genus: *Pterostylis*

Gordon Sylvester

Our Field Guides have produced quite a library of information over the years. The addition of Tag Names occasionally has caused a little confusion, mainly because the plant described is not necessarily available in all ER's (**Ecological Regions**)

In my estimation several species in the *Pterostylis* genus have this problem, including *P. "Bluff"* *P. banksii*, *P. banksii* agg. and *P. graminea*.

The 3rd edition of the current Field Guide declares the following

***Pt. graminea* Hook.f. Fl. Nov.-Zel 1: 248 (1853)**

Aug Nth to Jan Sth.

Image: St Arnaud ER 49; 20 Dec 2002.

Traits: several slender taxa usually with very long narrow grassy *leaves* that overtop the small *flower*.

Labellum tip blunt, flat. Few, widely spaced *nerves* in the *dorsal sepal* leaving wide white windows near the *anther*. Dorsal sepal may extend 0-9mm, with erect lateral sepals rising 0-9mm above the galea. *Labellum* red or steely blue, oblong with a raised midrib.

Habitat: light forest and scrub.

ERs 4-6, 8-25, 27-31, 35-40, 42, 44-50, 52- 53, 55, 57-58, 61, 65, 69-70, 72, 75-79.

Rarity: Common in suitable habitat.

Similar taxa

i) *Pt. "Sphagnum"* at Opuatia has swept back lateral sepals, a steel blue *labellum* and grows on *Sphagnum* moss islands.

ii) *Pt. "Peninsula"* from Brunner Pen, St Arnaud has a nutant galea, level *synsepalum*, tips of *lateral petals* and *dorsal sepal* coincident.

Notes: described originally by J. D. Hooker (1853) as, "like a miniature *P. Banksii* but without the long tails to the perianth". Other forms with tips of tepals coincident or with steel blue labella, may be separate taxa.

For many years while looking at *P. graminea*, all I observed was the flower. It was on Banks Peninsula, I noted two different leaf forms on two small colonies within 10 m of each other. Since that time I have noted the same differences in several other locations on the West Coast as well as Banks Peninsula.

I have made note of those differences below.

The leaves at right angles to each other, 180 degrees (TI).

P. graminea "TI" Same as TI. Leaves alternate around the stem at 120 degrees

More observations needed to clarify the distribution of the two varieties (2025).

P. "Bluff"

My recollection of *P. "Bluff"* is a short 45—60 mm high plant. In the manner of *P. banksii* with 4—6 crenulated leaves. Leaves about 50 to 60 mm long, grows on open ground on the Bluff Hills.

P. banksii

Flora of New Zealand volume 2 has the information that *P. banksii* is up to 50 cm tall. But what is not said is the flower is also very large. Unfortunately I have only seen this colony a few times, but it is consistently large, spread over two different sites about one kilometre apart, again on the Wet oops West Coast.

P. banksii agg.

Another species found in the Buller River Valley, again with a large flower. aff *banksii* but with red sepals and synsepalum.

Then we have the swarm of varieties in and around Franz and Fox. I wonder when this will all end [*likely never* - Ed.].



The inbox

Lawrence Porter
June 2025 | Upper Hutt



▼ *Corybas trilobus* agg.

Pterostylis trullifolia (with red stems) ▲



Archer Tarn

September 2024 | West Coast

What's wrong with common names?

Ian St George

They aren't used commonly except on *iNaturalist*. One name may be used for many plants and many names may be used for one plant. They are, in a word (or two), unstable and unreliable.

We might say the bamboo orchid is *Earina mucronata*, the Easter orchid *Earina autumnalis*, the lady's slipper orchid (aka winikā) *Den-drobium cunninghamii*, the potato orchid a *Gastrodia*.

But what if you aren't a Kiwi? A Malaysian might say the bamboo orchid is *Arundina graminifolia* (aka bird orchid, kinta weed, and phanyar). Others that the Easter orchid is *Maxillaria variabilis*, [Cattle-ya mossiae](#) or [Cattleya schroederiae](#). Or the lady's slipper refers to any one of many *Cypripedia* or *Paphiopedila*. And the potato orchid could be one of the 95 species in *Gastrodia*. "Common" names are used differently in different countries. Just google "spider orchids".

We went on a tour to the Te Anau glow worm caves in December. Afterwards our American-speaking cave guide suggested we check the plants along the local bush tracks and in doing so, suggested we might refer to the wall chart in their Beech House showing birds, ferns and local orchids.

Here is the part showing New Zealand native orchids. ►

I can imagine what happened here. The senior staff in the Poster Team told young Doris, "Doris, you're good with the internet: see if you can find suitable images of the bamboo orchid, the lady's slipper, the Easter orchid and the potato orchid."

And so she did. And she came up with foreign bamboo and lady's slipper orchids, inexplicably a gentian, and a potato orchid – *Gastrodia sesamoides* - which doesn't grow south of Murchison.

If the orchid stuff is wrong, how can we believe the other information? The local Māori history? The geology lesson? The talk on the life cycle of the glow worm? The safety instructions?

"It's certainly," the firm's Contact Centre Consultant emailed in reply to my startled exclamation, "quite interesting to learn that the images shown on the poster (whilst somewhat similar in appearance) are not the correct flower."

"Quite interesting"! Okay so she watches British television comedy.

But "somewhat similar in appearance"!

Really?

Orchids

New Zealand has over 160 variety of native orchids. They possess small, delicate, exquisite flowers of various colours and forms.



Lady slipper orchid



Bamboo orchid



Easter orchid



Potato orchid

The inbox

Pterostylis trullifolia



▼ green form



▲ bronze form ▲



Interesting observations from Hui Syn Chan noted *Pterostylis trullifolia* from the Rotorua area showing two colour variations: bronze and the more familiar green.

It was also noted that this year plants were flowering at least a month earlier (June) than in previous years (July), and this year many plants had even finished flowering in June.

'Ngā Tapuwae ō Townson'

Footsteps of Townson

6—7 December 2025



It's all on for Denniston Plateau / Westport area on 6 and 7 December!

From 1889 to 1905 William Townson, a pharmacist in Westport, was tromping round the local back country, discovering orchids and many other things.

In December 2022 Dr Ian St George and Denniston local Gary James retraced some of Townson's footsteps and by 2023 Ian had published his biography of Townson. Following the 2024 NZNOG Annual General Meeting, several members decided to create more regular weekend events, realising that as well as finding orchids, for the ongoing health of our group we need to create options that allow fellow members to meet more regularly.

Regional contacts Kirsty Williams and Rachel Taylor are hosting this mini tag-along in the footsteps of Townson, Ian St George, and Gary James. Bring your tramping clobber.

We will meet on the Saturday and Sunday mornings at The Scullery at Waimangaroa, for coffee and pies, then carpool and convoy up to the Denniston Plateau.

There are no shops. Bring your snacks, lunch and drinks each morning. Kirsty suggests you book accommodation as soon as you are coming. Westport is 15 minutes drive south of Waimangaroa, with Granity and Hector about 15 minutes north. Westport is your best bet for motels, while the route north has Airbnb's and other options. Google tells me Charleston is about 45 minutes south of Waimangaroa, and the Caving Club base in Charleston is \$15 pp/pn, for a basic off-grid hut with two small rooms, each with a double bed, plus mattresses for the floor. Plenty of room for campervans and tents. Message Alice Shanks through the FB page.

This foray is two days. It can be a stepping stone to days or regions either side if you have time to travel further. We will plan a group meal in Westport on at least the Friday and Saturday nights.

Please use the group FB page for communications, or email me on meanieb1@gmail.com—I may take a few days to reply—or email kirsty44nikaupaul@gmail.com if you need more advice.

Who's footsteps again?

Ian's biography tells us William Townson was out searching for all manner of natural finds, when in 1892 he was asked to collect and dry plants, particularly of the orchid *Calochilus*



paludosus. Five years later, he was asked if he could search for it again, between Westport and Charleston, in the pākihi. That year he found it. A specimen was sent off and on 14 December 1892 identified.

In 1900 Townson wrote and introduced himself to T.F. Cheeseman. He offered to collect, if Cheeseman the eminent botanist in Auckland could identify. Ian writes, “this was the beginning of a fruitful botanical relationship that lasted 23 years, with, probably, nearly all of their letters extant.” Dr Leonard Cockayne wrote in 1907 that Townson had catalogued 789 species.

It was Cheeseman, who on 17 December 1901 was clearly excited to receive an entirely new orchid that we also hope to find – *Townsonia deflexa*. Townson had packed it off to Auckland in a parcel with more *Calochilus paludosus*, plus *Chiloglottis traversii* which we now know as *Aporostylis bifolia*. Of the new orchid, Cheeseman enthused “this last is a most interesting discovery... I must congratulate you on discovering such an interesting addition to our Flora. Where did you find it?”.

So that’s where we’re heading – to seek, as Townson replied, “a very scarce plant growing at an elevation of 2000 feet in the dense scrub... in thick moss... partial to mossy logs, but is everywhere very sparsely distributed.”

In 1906, when Cheeseman published his *Manual of the New Zealand flora* he warmly acknowledged Townson’s exploration of a wide-ranging and often high altitude region and the diversity of flora new to botanists. He particularly mentioned , “the interesting new genus of Orchideæ, which I have named in his honour Townsonia.”

We’re not going to a beach resort, or a herbarium....

The Denniston Plateau gets weather. As Ian experienced, “it’s a sombre, bleak, misty place in December.’ He writes of finding other orchids then, as “Gary said ‘look down by your foot’ and indeed I had nearly stepped on the one *Townsonia* he had found... a thrill to see it close to where Townson saw it 121 years earlier.”

William Townson wasn’t making a living from his tramping and collecting, he wasn’t a trained botanist, he was the local chemist. He’s an inspiration to those of us enthusiastic amateurs juggling weekends and occasional annual leave for our native orchids. I can’t say how much we will find, or what will be in flower that weekend, but I’m bringing my boots.

For more information on William Townson, see Ian St George’s recent biography, “A most delightful pursuit”. You can get a copy here: <https://onadmiralroad.co.nz/william-lewis-townson/>

Further details will be communicated via the NZNOG Members Facebook group, or if you do not have Facebook, get in touch with Melanie (meanieb1@gmail.com) to register your interest.

The inbox

Genoplesium pumilum



Bill Campbell

May 2025 | Lake Ohia

Upcoming Events

6 September 2025

New Zealand Native Orchid Group

Visit to Allan Herbarium native orchid collection, Lincoln

October 2025

Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand Inc.

EIANZ Annual Conference, Perth

17–20 October 2025

New Zealand Native Orchid Group

AGM and Field Days, Ōtorohanga (see [Page 4](#))

20 November 2025

New Zealand Ecological Society

Annual Conference, Online and local “hubs”

5–7 December 2025

Iwitahi Native Orchid Reserve management committee

Iwitahi Working Bee & Native Orchid Weekend, Iwitahi (see [Page 13](#))

6–7 December 2025

New Zealand Native Orchid Group

‘Ngā Tapuwae ō Townson’ Field Trip, Westport (see [Page 19](#)).

30 November—4 December 2026

New Zealand Ecological Society & Society for Conservation Biology Oceania (SCBO)

Annual Conference, Auckland (AUT)

*Do you know about an upcoming event that the NZNOG may be interested in? Let me know by email:
caralisa95@gmail.com*

Tips and tricks for finding New Zealand orchids with Mark Moorhouse

If you have encountered a *Corybas* colony, search plants with straighter sides to the leaves as these are the ones which have attempted to flower, some successfully others not so.

The inbox

Editor's top picks from recent *iNaturalist* observations

Sebastian Doak

May 2025 | West Coast | [iNaturalist](#)



▼ *Dendrobium cunninghamii*

Corybas cheesemanii ▲



Saryu Mae

June 2025 | Huia, Tāmaki Makaurau | [iNaturalist](#)

2025-2026 subscription increase



Annual subscription rates are increasing from **1 October 2025**

- New Zealand membership with four printed journals per year: **\$60**
- Overseas membership with four printed journals per year: **\$60**
- New Zealand student membership with four printed journals per year: **\$25**
- Electronic membership with four PDF journals emailed to you per year: **\$25**

Subscription runs from 1st October - 30th September.

Please use internet banking to transfer your subscription payment into the following bank account.

Bank: ANZ - Wellington Branch
Name: NZ Native Orchid Group
Account Number: 06-0909-0177836-000

SWIFT code: ANZBNZ22

Note: Please put your **name** in the Reference space and **Membership** in the Details space so we know the deposit was from you

Please follow this link if you would like to renew your membership online:

<https://www.nativeorchids.co.nz/join/>

