



Danhatchia australis

Common Name(s):

Yoania, Danhatchia

Threat Status (2009):

Naturally Uncommon

Distribution:

Indigenous. New Zealand (see de Lange & Molloy 1998): North and South Islands. In the North Island recorded from Waipoua south to Mt Pirongia but mainly found north of Waiuku. Also on Little and Great Barrier and the Mokohinau Islands. In the South Island known only from the Kaihoka Lakes area, north-west Nelson. Also present in Australia where it is known only from one site in New South Wales (see <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=sp&name=Danhatchia~australis>)

Habitat:

Coastal to lowland, in forest dominated by taraire (*Beilschmiedia tarairi*) and nikau (*Rhopalostylis sapida*). This saprophytic orchid grows in deep leaf litter intermixed with a fungus which is mostly associated with nikau. Popular mythology has it that it is exclusively associated with taraire this is incorrect (see de Lange & Molloy 1998). It has also been collected once growing from amongst dense shrubs of Spanish Heather (*Erica lusitanica*). Easily overlooked as it does not necessarily flower every year, and after heavy flowering plants may rest for several years before flowering again.

Features:

Saprophytic, subterranean, leafless, rhizomatous, perennial herb lacking chlorophyll. Rhizomes buried deep within partially decomposed leaves and leaf mould; 3-5 mm diameter, vermiform, brittle, more or less opaque, pinkish grey coloured, much-branched and interwoven, irregularly bearing tufts of long colourless hairs, and vestigial scale-leaves. Stems erect up to 200 mm tall, unbranched, pale rose-pink, pinkish-grey, pale brown to mushroom grey, glabrescent to glandular-pubescent. Scale-leaves 1-7(-15), 10-15 mm long, chartaceous, much paler than stem, many-nerved, basal scale-leaves semi-tubular, those higher up open-sheathed. Floral bracts similar to scale-leaves. Pedicels very short. Flowers 1-5(-10), suberect. Perianth 6 mm long, brownish or pinkish-grey with white apices, externally more or less glandular-pubescent. Dorsal sepal more or less oblong, slightly concave; lateral sepals similar, more or less spreading. Petals similar, included within sepals. Labellum sessile, orbicular to broadly oblong, column-embracing; base broad, slightly pouched bearing on each side several fleshy hairs and/or elongated calli; median line thickened; sides becoming thick, fleshy and stiff towards apex, externally tuberculate; margins inturned, thin and membranous; mid-lobe minute, orbicular, deeply concave. Column almost as tall as labellum, basally subcylindric becoming winged, wings very narrow; filament broad, rigid; connective slightly produced; anther tall, erect, stationary, each cell with two sets of transversely oblique, closely packed, vermiform, sectile, pollinia; stigma appearing bilobed, often funneliform, with side lobes that flare widely in old flowers; rostellum long, narrow-triangular, wedged between the long pollinia.

Flowering:

December - February

Fruiting:

December - April

Threats:

Not Threatened in New Zealand - but not very common either, and at risk from orchid collectors. Possibly threatened in Australia although its recent discovery there (2009) suggests it may be more widespread having been simply overlooked.

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=1374



Caption: Under taraire, Great Barrier Island. Jan 1983.

Photographer: Ewen Cameron



Caption: *Danhatchia australis*

Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth