

Corybas betchei (F. Muell.) Schltr.

Corysanthes betchei F. Muell.

SAMOAN NAME: none

ENGLISH NAME: none

STATUS: rare Samoa endemic

REASON FOR LISTING: rarity of collections, possibly now extinct

SUGGESTED ACTION: This species is possibly extinct, since it is known only a single collection made over 120 years ago. It should be looked for, however, in any montane surveys on 'Upolu and even Savai'i, but it is hard to spot because of its small size. Recommended for the Red List of Samoan plants.

Endemic to Samoa, probably restricted to foothill or montane forest of 'Upolu, but no data was recorded on the specimen. The genus is absent from Fiji and the rest of Polynesia, but three species are found in Vanuatu. The discussion by F. Muell in Wing's Southern Science Record 1: 171 (1881) should be checked.

Small terrestrial orchid up 5 cm in height growing from an ovoid tuber. Leaf solitary; blade cordate, 1.8–3 x 1.5–2.6 cm, cordate at the base, acute at the tip; surfaces glabrous, possibly with white veins (this detail was not recorded in the original description); margins entire. **Inflorescence** of a solitary flower subtended by a linear bract 4–5 mm long, the flower helmet shaped, probably white and maroon, the ovary 3–4 mm long. Sepals unequal, dorsal sepal curved forwards, obovate, rounded at the tip, 1.4–1.5 x ca. 8 mm; lateral sepals linear-tapering, 1–1.2 x ca. 0.5 cm. **Petals** linear-tapering, 8–9 x ca. 0.5 cm; lip strongly recurved, ca. 1.2 x 1.2 cm, apical margins erose; spurs short, conical, ca. 1.5 mm long. Column 3–4 m long. **Fruit** not described. **Flowering** and fruiting times unknown.

Distinguishable by its small terrestrial orchid habit; single heart-shaped leaf arising from a tuber; and inflorescence of a single white and maroon flower.

UPOLU:

Betche s.n.—Without further locality. (Specimen at Melbourne.)

