

Microtatorchis samoensis Schltr.

SAMOAN NAME: none

ENGLISH NAME: none

STATUS: rare indigenous

REASON FOR LISTING: rarity of collections

SUGGESTED ACTION: Not much can be done for this orchid, since epiphytic orchids are hard to locate because they are often high up in the forest canopy. Its infrequency of collection may be a result of this, or small size, rather than actual rarity. It should be looked for in any future upland botanical surveys.

Indigenous to Samoa, also found in Fiji, and possibly Tahiti. In Samoa it occurs in montane forest on Savai'i and 'Upolu, reported from 800 to 900 m elevation. No Samoan names or uses have been reported.



Tiny epiphytic orchid 2–4 cm in height, with filiform roots up to 1 mm in diameter. **Leaves** simple, alternate; blade oblanceolate, 1.5–6 x 0.2–0.4 cm, acute at the base, acute at the tip; surfaces glabrous; margins entire; petiole sheathing at the base. **Inflorescence** an erect, laxly few-flowered raceme 2–3 cm long; the rachis bearing flowers and small, scale-like, ovate, acute-tipped bracts 2–3 mm long on the upper half; flowers greenish yellow. Sepals similar, lanceolate, acuminate at the tip, fused in the lower 1/3, 1.5–2 x ca. 1 mm. **Petals** similar to sepals. Lip narrowly elliptic-ovate, 1.5–2 x 0.4–0.6 mm, the tip with a small appendage 0.2–0.3 mm long; side lobes somewhat incurved; spur globose, ca. 0.5 mm long; column short, lacking a foot. **Fruit** an ellipsoid capsule 3.5–8 mm long. **Flowering** and fruiting probably occur throughout the year.

Distinguishable by its tiny epiphytic orchid habit; tiny leaves less than 7 mm long; raceme up to 3 cm bearing tiny yellowish green flowers subtended by tiny leaf-like bracts up to 3 mm long.

SAVAII:

Vaupel 470—(Specimen not at Bishop Museum—lost?).

Christophersen 2268—Montane forest near Olo at 800 m elevation.

UPOLU:

Whistler 7083—Montane forest on the rim of Mt. Fiamoe at 900 m elevation.