

Phreatia minima 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 and its small size rather than actual rarity.

Indigenous to Samoa, also found in New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. In Samoa it occurs in montane and volcanic scrub forest on Savai'i and 'Upolu, reported from 575 to 670 m elevation. All four known collections have been made since 1972. This is unusual, but perhaps it is because these orchids are so small and inconspicuous. No Samoan names or uses have been reported.



Tiny epiphytic orchid 1.5–3 cm in height. **Leaves** simple, alternate, 3–5; blade fleshy, linear-oblong, 1–3.5 x 0.2–0.3 cm, attenuate at the base, obtuse at the tip; surfaces glabrous; margins entire; petiole sheathing at the base. **Inflorescence** a lateral, laxly several-flowered raceme up to 3 cm long, bearing minute bracts; flowers not opening widely, translucent white or pale green, probably self-pollinating; ovary 1–2 mm long. Sepals unequal; dorsal sepal ovate, subacute at the tip, ca. 1 x 0.6–0.7 mm; lateral sepals obliquely ovate, subacute at the tip, ca. 1 x 0.7–0.8 mm; mentum shortly conical. **Petals** narrowly oblong-elliptic, obtuse, ca. 0.7 x 0.3 mm. Lip obovate-spathulate, rounded at the tip, 0.6–0.7 x 0.5 mm; claw oblong; column very short; foot ca. 0.5 mm long. **Fruit** a tiny ellipsoid capsule 1.5–2 mm long. **Flowering** and fruiting occur throughout the year.

Distinguishable by its tiny epiphytic orchid habit; linear-oblong leaves up to 3 mm wide; short several-flowered racemes up to 3 cm long; and tiny flowers less than 1.5 mm long.

SAVAII:

Whistler 8292—Volcanic scrub forest below Matāvanu Crater at 575 m elevation.

Whistler 9364—Volcanic scrub forest near Matāvanu Crater at 600 m elevation.

UPOLU:

Whistler 165—Montane forest about 1 mile north of Tiāvi waterfall at ca. 600 m elevation.

Whistler 2047a—Montane forest on the rim of Mt. Sina'ele at 670 m elevation.