

Taeniophyllum savaiense Cribb and Whistler

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 rather than actual rarity. Recommended for the Red List of Samoan plants.

Endemic to Samoa, where it is found in lowland to foothill and lava flow scrub forest on Savai'i, reported from 10 to 580 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.



Small epiphytic herb with long, flattened, spreading, photosynthetic up to 20 cm × 1–3 mm. **Leaves** absent. **Inflorescence** of several densely many-flowered racemes 4–8 cm long, peduncle; rachis filiform, bearing ovate, distichous bracts 1–2 mm long; flowers cream-colored; pedicel and less than 1 mm long. Sepals unequal, dorsal sepal oblong, acute at the tip, 1.5–2 × ca. 0.7 mm; lateral sepals obliquely oblong-lanceolate, acute at the tip, 1.2–2 × ca. 1 mm. **Petals** oblong, obtuse at the tip, ca. 2 × 0.5 mm. Lip obscurely 3-lobed, ovate, acute but fleshy at the tip, ca. 1.5 × 0.7 mm; spur scrotiform, ca. 1 mm across; column short. **Fruit** a narrowly oblong capsule 5–7 mm long. **Flowering** and fruiting probably occur throughout the year.

Distinguishable by its tiny epiphytic, stemless and leafless habit; long flattened roots appressed to the substrate; tiny white flowers in racemes 4–8 cm long; and oblong capsule less than 8 mm long.

SAVAII:

Whistler 26—Lowland forest near the forestry road above Āsau, no elevation given.

Whistler 927—Lowland forest just east of the old timber mill at Āsau at 50 m elevation.

Whistler 970—Foothill forest above Āsau at 440 m elevation.

Whistler 5146—Rim of Matavanu crater at 580 m elevation.