

*Thelasis carinata* Bl.

**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 relatively small size rather than actual rarity.

Indigenous to Samoa, ranging westward to Southeast Asia. In Samoa it is found in foothill to montane forest of 'Upolu and Savai'i, reported from 450 to 500 m elevation. Strangely, all three specimens of this orchid were collected within a two-year span. No Samoan names or uses have been reported.

**Small epiphytic orchid**, appearing stemless, the leaves arising from obscure, ovoid, bilaterally flattened pseudobulbs up to 4.5 x 1.5 cm, unifoliate at the tip but subtended by several leaves arranged in a fan. **Leaves** simple, alternate, twisted at the base to lie in one plane; blade erect or suberect, linear, 12–45 x 1.2–2.5 cm, articulate to channeled at the base, unequally bilobed at the obtuse tip; surfaces glabrous; margins entire; petiole indistinct. **Inflorescence** an erect raceme 15–35 cm long, peduncle 12–30 cm long, slender; rachis up to 16 cm long, bearing very closely spaced, reflexed, triangular or lanceolate bracts 1.5–3 mm long; flowers small, white or pale yellow, rarely suffused with purple, probably autogamous and perhaps cleistogamous, ovary pendent, ca. 4 mm long. Sepals unequal; dorsal sepal oblong-ovate, acute at the tip, ca. 3.5 x 1.5 mm; lateral sepals oblong-lanceolate, acute at the tip, 3–3.5 x 1.5–2 mm, keeled on the outer surface. **Petals** oblong-lanceolate, acute at the tip, 2–3 x ca. 0.8 mm. Lip ovate, obscurely 3-lobed in the basal part, acute at the tip, 3–3.5 x 1.5–2 mm; column lacking a foot. **Fruit** an obovoid capsule 3.5–5 mm long. **Flowering** reported from September, February, and March, probably both flowering and fruiting occurring throughout the year.

**Distinguishable** by its small epiphytic herb habit; leaves appearing equitant arranged somewhat fan-like; many-flowered raceme 15–35 cm long; tiny white flowers less than 3 mm long; and small obovoid capsule bearing the dried erect perianth about half as long.

**SAVAII:**

Whistler 1681—Epiphyte in foothill forest in "Forestry Block 6" behind Vaisala and 'Auala at 450 m elevation.

**UPOLU:**

Whistler 672—Epiphyte on trees in foothill forest behind Utumapu at 360 to 500 m elevation.

Whistler 1522—Foothill to montane forest near Lanoataata at 500 to 600 m elevation.

