# Asplenium appendiculatum subsp. maritimum

## COMMON NAMES
coastal spleenwort

## BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Not Threatened
Jump to previous conservation statuses

## CATEGORY
Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS
Ferns

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION
**Rhizome** short, erect, bearing dark brown subulate scales up to 15 × 2 mm. **Stipes** 50–150 mm long, brown below, green above, covered in subulate to narrowly triangular scales with long filiform apices. **Laminae** relatively short and broad, elliptic, 100–250 × 70–200 mm, dark green, leathery or very thick and fleshy, slightly stiff and upright, bi- to tripinnate. **Raches** green, scaly, prominently ridged. **Pinnae** 7–15 pairs, those at the base ovate, those above very narrowly ovate, acute, stalked, 30–100 × 5–30 mm, covered on underside in tiny scales. **Pinnules**: upper pinnules linear, acute, entire and sessile; lower pinnules ovate to elliptic and pinnatifid, up to 20 × 10 mm. **Sori** submarginal, 2–7 mm long.

Moa Point, Wellington. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

Moa Point, Wellington. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## SIMILAR TAXA
Differs from *Asplenium flaccidum* G.Forst. by its strict terrestrial growth habit, being octoploid (2n = 288) rather than tetraploid (2n = 144) and by having a more or less erect frond and a larger spore size. It can be distinguished from *A. haurakiense* (Brownsey) Ogle by its allopatric distribution, and by the lack of a greatly elongated basal acroscopic pinnule on each pinna. *Asplenium appendiculatum* (Labill.) C.Presl subsp. *appendiculatum* differs from subsp. *maritimum* by its preference for inland habitats, somewhat larger, lanceolate to elliptic fronds which tend to droop, more pinnae pairs, with those at the base ovate, and those above very narrowly ovate or elliptic, often with long relatively undivided acuminate tips; and by the lower pinnules being larger, and narrowly elliptic and pinnatifid to pinnate.

## DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (mainly around Cook Strait but known as far north as the Waitakere coastline, west of Auckland), South Island (as far south as Banks Peninsula and Kahurangi Point).

## HABITAT
Coastal. Usually on exposed cliffs and rocks subject to salt spray, or amongst coastal scrub.

## GENUS
Asplenium

## FAMILY
Aspleniaceae

## AUTHORITY
Asplenium appendiculatum subsp. maritimum (Brownsey) Brownsey

## SYNONYMS
Asplenium terrestre subsp. maritimum Brownsey; Asplenium flaccidum var. littoralis Dobbie

## ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS
No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown. A very attractive fern which can be rather slow growing. Best in a large pot or planted in a deep, rich, moist soil in semi-shade. Prone to scale and mealy bug infections.

## ETYMOLOGY
**asplenium**: From the Greek a- 'without' and splene 'spleen', a northern hemisphere species, the black spleenwort (Asplenium adiantum-nigrum), was once believed to be a cure for diseases of the spleen.
**appendiculatum**: Appendiculate, with small appendages or projections, hanging in small fragments
**maritimum**: From the Latin mare 'sea', meaning growing on the sea shore

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 288

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | Not Threatened
2012 | Not Threatened
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened
Jump to current conservation status

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES
Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Endangered | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, Sp Help
The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland" Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING
Brownsey PJ. 1977. A taxonomic revision of the New Zealand species of *Asplenium*. *New Zealand Journal of Botany 15(1)*: 39–86. https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.1977.10429618.

## ATTRIBUTION
Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (3 February 2005): Description from: Brownsey (1977)

## MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/asplenium-appendiculatum-subsp-maritimum/

## PDF DATE
08 June 2026