

# Asplenium cimmeriorum

## COMMON NAMES

cave spleenwort

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp, DPS, DPT, RR

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## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Shortly-creeping, rhizomatous fern. **Rhizomes** up to 60 mm long, densely invested in blackish-brown scales, up to 10 × 4 mm. **Stipes** 25–130 mm long; stipes and rachises green, straw-coloured or blue-green, covered in subulate scales up to 25 × 1 mm. **Laminae** narrowly triangular or narrowly ovate, sometimes triangular or ovate, 2–3-pinnate, 35–220 × 15–70 mm, thin, dark green or blue-green, bearing scattered scales. **Primary pinnae** in 4–14–(17) pairs, 10–40 × 5–17 mm. **Secondary pinnae** linear or elliptic, the lower ones divided. **Sori** 1.5–3 mm long, extending along the ultimate segments, 1.5–3 mm long, margins of indusia entire.

## SIMILAR TAXA

It can be distinguished from *Asplenium bulbiferum* by its smaller size, shortly creeping rhizomes, narrowly triangular fronds and lack of bulbils. From *A. gracillimum* it differs by its small size, and shortly creeping rhizomes.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (cave entrances and limestone areas in the Waitomo area), South Island (more common in the west, where it has been recorded from Karamea south to Punakaiki).

## HABITAT

Primarily confined to heavily shaded, calcareous rocks in high rainfall areas, especially cave entrances and archways. Often found underneath other ferns such as *Austroblechnum lanceolatum* (R.Br.) Gasper et V.A.O.Dittrich.

## THREATS

Probably more common than was believed when it was formally described in 1997. However it does seem to have a naturally sporadic distribution, particularly in the North Island, where forested, undisturbed entrances to caves are less common.

## GENUS

Asplenium

## FAMILY

Aspleniaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Asplenium cimmeriorum* Brownsey et de Lange

## SYNONYMS

None



Waitomo. Photographer: Gillian M. Crowcroft, Date taken: 01/08/1998, Licence: All rights reserved.



*Asplenium cimmeriorum* at Mangapohue Natural Bridge, near Marokopa. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## TAXONOMIC NOTES

North and South Island populations based on analysis of chloroplast sequences appear to have independent hybrid origins. Further research is needed to determine whether taxonomic distinction can be made.

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Can be grown from spores which taken anywhere from 16—26 months to produce sporophytes. Rather slow growing. Does best in a pot in semi-shade. It is very prone to scale and mealy bug attack.

## 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.

## NVS CODE

ASPCIM

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 288

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, RR, Sp

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Sparse

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Brownsey PJ, de Lange PJ. 1997. *Asplenium cimmericium*, a new fern species from New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 35(3): 283–292. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.1997.10410154>.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 28 October 2005. Description adapted from Brownsey & de Lange (1997).

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/asplenium-cimmericium/> (Date website was queried)

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/asplenium-cimmericium/>

## PDF DATE

08 June 2026