

Asplenium decurrens

COMMON NAMES

northern shore spleenwort

BIOSTATUS

Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Rhizome stout, often forming a hard woody mass above ground, bearing brown, shiny, ovate, acuminate scales up to 15×4 mm. **Stipes** 20–180 mm long, dark brown at base, green above, stout, covered in narrowly triangular scales with acute or acuminate apices. **Laminae** lanceolate to ovate, $40\text{--}200 \times 20\text{--}70$ mm, dull green, very thick and fleshy, pinnate. **Raches** green, stout, prominently grooved and scaly. **Pinnae** 4–18 pairs, narrowly ovate to oblong, obtuse to acute, crenate-serrate to entire, cuneate at base, $10\text{--}40 \times 7\text{--}12$ mm, scaly on the underside. **Sori** up to 10 mm long, not reaching to lamina edge. **Spores** $(39)\text{--}45\text{--}52\text{--}(60) \times (25)\text{--}29\text{--}33\text{--}(38)$ μm .

SIMILAR TAXA

Recognised by the penchant for exposed sea cliffs; by the simply pinnate, thick and fleshy fronds which are < 30 mm wide; by the stipe and rachis which is scaly; by the usually < 8 pairs of pinnae; and by the pinnae bearing scales on the underside only. *Asplenium obtusatum* differs from *A. decurrens* by its allopatric distribution, ovate scales, mostly larger fronds, smaller spores and tetraploid chromosome number ($2n = 144$ cf. $2n = 288$ in *A. decurrens*).

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: Kermadec Islands, Manawatāwhi / Three Kings Islands, North Island (from Te Pahi to just south of the Tongaporutu River in the west and to Lottin point in the east). Also Australia.

HABITAT

On coastal rocks or amongst petrel scrub especially in places exposed to salt spray.

GENUS

Asplenium

FAMILY

Aspleniaceae

AUTHORITY

Asplenium decurrens Willd.

SYNONYMS

Asplenium obtusatum subsp. *northlandicum* Brownsey, *Asplenium northlandicum* (Brownsey) Ogle, *Asplenium sarmentosum* Willd.



North Cape. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 24/02/2011, Licence: CC BY.



Sori. North Cape. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 24/02/2011, Licence: CC BY.

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown but generally rather slow. A spectacular pot plant.

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.

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 288

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DE, DPS, DPT, RR, Sp, TL 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 P.J. 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 29 August 2007. Description adapted from Brownsey (1977).

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

25 May 2026