

Asplenium flabellifolium

COMMON NAME

butterfly fern, walking fern, necklace fern

SYNONYMS

Chamaefilix flabellifolium (Cav.) Farw.; *Asplenium flabellifolium* var. *ramosum* Colenso

FAMILY

Aspleniaceae

AUTHORITY

Asplenium flabellifolium Cav.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

NVS CODE

ASPFLB

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 277-280

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: North and South mostly easterly from the Bay of Islands. Also present in Australia

HABITAT

Coastal to subalpine. Usually in dry rocky ground, on lava and scoria fields, in grassy areas, within scrub, or along river banks in moderately open alluvial forest. Never found in deep shade or dense forest.

FEATURES

Rhizome short, erect, bearing dark brown subulate scales with long filiform apices up to 6 × 5 mm. Stipes 1-10 cm long, green or yellow-green, slender, lacking scales. Laminae linear, 70-250 × 10-25 mm, light green, flaccid and often prostrate, pinnate. Rachis green, weak, lacking scales, frequently extending beyond the uppermost pinnae and rooting at their apices. Pinnae 8-25 pairs, gradually decreasing in size from base to apex, fan shaped, crenate-dentate, cuneate at base, lowest 5-15 × 5-20 mm. Sori radiating along veins, up to 6 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

Recognised by the distinctive lax green or yellow-green fronds which root at the apices, are < 30 mm wide and usually have > 8 pairs of fan-shaped pinnae; and by the stipe and rachis which lack scales.



Mt Wellington. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



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FLOWERING

Not applicable - spore producing

FLOWER COLOURS

No flowers

FRUITING

Not applicable - spore producing

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown. An excellent pot and hanging basket fern. Can be slow establish. Prefers semi-shade, and should be planted in a fertile, free draining soil, or among rocks.

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.

flabellifolium: Fan-shaped foliage; from the Latin flabellum and folium

WHERE TO BUY

Occasionally sold by plant and specialist native plant nurseries.

ATTRIBUTION

Description from Brownsey (1977)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Brownsey, P.J. 1977: A taxonomic revision of the New Zealand species of *Asplenium*. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 15: 39-86.

MORE INFORMATION

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