Asplenium lamprophyllum

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

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

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Ferns

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Rhizome creeping, up to 150 mm long, pale green with a few scattered scales, stoloniferous. **Stipes** 60–200 mm long, pale green above, brown below, deeply grooved, covered in small, very dark, triangular to ovate scales which have thick cell walls. **Laminae** lanceolate to elliptic, 150–600 × 70–200 mm, light green, glossy above, thin, bipinnate. **Raches** green, scaly, prominently grooved. **Pinnae** 12–20 pairs, lanceolate to narrowly ovate, acuminate, stalked, 30–100 × 5–25 mm, scaly on underside; lower pinnae themselves pinnate, upper ones pinnatifid. **Pinnules** sessile or shortly stalked, elliptic, often deeply serrate, 10–20 × 5–15 mm. **Sori** 3–10 mm long, nearer mid-vein than margin. **Sporangia** orange brown.



Coromandel. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Smith's Bush, Auckland. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 26/05/2013, Licence: CC BY.

SIMILAR TAXA
Recognised by the widely creeping, stoloniferous growth habit, bright green, membranous, glossy above, paler below, 2- or more pinnate fronds which lack bulbils, and orange-brown sporangia. The fresh fronds, when crushed characteristically smell of oil of winter green.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (Te Paki south to near Wanganui and the northern Hawke's Bay but only common north of Mokau and Gisborne).

HABITAT
Coastal to montane. Mostly found within alluvial forest, always in shaded sites or on the buttresses of swamp trees, or in other forested areas on free draining soils, on clay banks, or on basalt or limestone rock outcrops and rock strewn ground. Usually forming carpet over extensive areas.

GENUS
Asplenium

FAMILY
Aspleniaceae

AUTHORITY
Asplenium lamprophyllum Carse

SYNONYMS
None

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Minute spores are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown but rather slow. Does best in a semi-shaded site, planted within a deep, rich, free draining soil. A beautiful plant that deserves to be more widely cultivated.

PLANT OF THE MONTH
This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for January 2009 for the full story.

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
ASPLAM

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 144

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 Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT 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.
Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics 11*: 285–309. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001.

ATTRIBUTION
Description from Brownsey (1977).

MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/asplenium-lamprophyllum/

PDF DATE
27 May 2026