

Asplenium polyodon

COMMON NAME

sickle spleenwort

SYNONYMS

Asplenium falcatum Lam.; *Asplenium adiantoides* var. *polyodon* (G.Forst.) C.Chr.; *Asplenium falcatum* var. *caudatum* sensu Allan; *Tarachia falcata* (Lam.) C.Presl; *Tarachia polyodon* (G.Forst.) C.Presl; *Trichomanes adiantoides* L.; *Asplenium forsterianum* Colenso; *Tarachia adiantoides* (L.) Nakai ex Tuyama; *Asplenium adiantoides* (L.) C.Chr.; *Asplenium caudatum* sensu Hook.f.; *Asplenium falcatum* sensu A.Rich.

FAMILY

Aspleniaceae

AUTHORITY

Asplenium polyodon G.Forst.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

NVS CODE

ASPPOL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 144

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: Kermadec, Three Kings, North, South, Stewart and Chatham Islands. Also Madagascar, Indo-Malaysian, Australia, and the Pacific Islands. In the South Island mainly western, in the east found as far south as Bull Creek on the coast south of Dunedin

HABITAT

Coastal to montane. In scrub and dense forest, often as an epiphyte but also on rock outcrops, fallen logs and on the ground.



Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



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FEATURES

Rhizome stout, short creeping, densely covered in red-brown, narrowly triangular scales up to 10 × 1 mm. Stipes 100-300 mm long, dark brown, stiff, densely covered in scales similar to but smaller than those of the rhizome. Laminae lanceolate, 250-500 (or more) × 100-200 mm, dark green and glossy above, paler and dull below, frequently pendulous, pinnate. Raches dark chocolate brown, very scaly. Pinnae 25 (or more) pairs, narrowly angular-ovate to ovate, sometimes with a large rounded basal acroscopic lobe, acuminate, doubly serrate, 50-100 × 10-20 mm, scaly and with prominent veins on underside. Sori often slightly curved away from the midrib, up to 2 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

Recognised by the simply pinnate frond which are > 30 mm wide; by the dark chocolate brown rachis; and by the pinnae irregularly and doubly serrate

FLOWERING

Not applicable - spore producing

FLOWER COLOURS

No flowers

FRUITING

Not applicable - spore producing

LIFE CYCLE

Minute spores are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Rather slow growing but a very attractive species which is excellent in a pot, on a shaded rock wall, or planted in a free draining, moist, fertile soil under tall trees.

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.

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.

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 2009 Vol. 11 No. 4 pp. 285-309

MORE INFORMATION

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