

Asplenium richardii

COMMON NAME

Richard's spleenwort

SYNONYMS

Asplenium adiantoides var. *richardii* Hook.f. in Hook.; *Asplenium raoulii* var. *richardii* (Hook.f.) Mett.

FAMILY

Aspleniaceae

AUTHORITY

Asplenium richardii (Hook.f) Hook.f.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

NVS CODE

ASPRIC

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 288

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (Mt Honokawa, Mt Ruapehu, and parts of the Kaimanawa Range), South Island (mainly east of the Main Divide).

HABITAT

Montane to alpine. On basalt, limestone, schist and greywacke rock outcrops, cliff faces (where usually in crevices), amongst boulders, and on stream banks particularly under beech (*Nothofagaceae*) forest.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Rhizome short, stout, erect, bearing dark brown subulate scales up to 20 × 2 mm. **Stipes** 50–150 mm long, brown on underside, green above, densely covered in subulate scales with filiform apices. **Laminae** ovate to narrowly ovate, 100–250 × 40–120 mm, dark green, relatively thin, normally tripinnate. **Raches** green, very scaly, slightly grooved. **Pinnae** 10–15 crowded and overlapping pairs, ovate to narrowly ovate, sub-acute, stalked, 20–80 × 10–40 mm. **Secondary pinnae** stalked, ovate, 10–20 × 10–15 mm, again pinnate or pinnatifid. **Ultimate segments** linear, acute or sub-acute, up to 8 mm long. Pinnae and pinnules not flattened in one plane but spreading in three dimensions. **Sori** 2–4 mm long, submarginal.



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



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SIMILAR TAXA

Most likely to be confused with *A. hookerianum* Colenso from which it differs by the usually much larger size and stouter stipe; by the linear ultimate segments which are mostly < 1 mm wide; and by the pinnae and pinnules which are crowded and overlapping. *Asplenium richardii* is scarce and exclusively alpine in the North Island, and more common in higher elevations of the drier, eastern South Island than *A. hookerianum*.

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown, and an excellent pot plant. However, rather slow growing, and as with all asplenias prone to infestations of scale and mealy bugs.

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.

richardii: Named after Achille Richard (1794-1852) - a French botanist who described several New Zealand plant species

WHERE TO BUY

Not Commercially Available

ATTRIBUTION

Description from Brownsey (1977).

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>.

MORE INFORMATION

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