

# 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

2012 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North (Mt Honokawa, Mt Ruapehu, and parts of the Kaimanawa Range), and South Islands (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 (*Nothofagus*) forest.

## FEATURES

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



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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 the higher altitudinal part of the drier, eastern South Island than *A. hookerianum*.

### 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

Easily grown, and an excellent pot plant. However, rather slow growing, and as with all asplenia 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, 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-richardii/>