

# Asplenium richardii

## COMMON NAMES

Richard's spleenwort

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

## 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.

## 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*.

## 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.

## GENUS

*Asplenium*

## FAMILY

Aspleniaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Asplenium richardii* (Hook.f) Hook.f.

## SYNONYMS

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

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes



Arthur's Pass. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



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

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

## NVS CODE

ASPRIC

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 288

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "[Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025](#)" Jarvie S 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>.

## ATTRIBUTION

Description from Brownsey (1977).

## MORE INFORMATION

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

## PDF DATE

25 May 2026