

Asplenium scleroprium

COMMON NAMES

southern shore spleenwort

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp, DPS, DPT

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CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stout, tufted fern. **Rhizomes** stout, erect, fleshy, densely invested in blackish-brown scales. **Stipes** 150–500 mm long, stipes and rachises brown below, green above, covered in dense subulate scales. **Laminae** ovate to narrowly ovate or elliptic, pinnate, 150–500 × 80–200 mm, dark green, blue green, thick, somewhat fleshy, leathery, bearing scattered scales. **Pinnae** 50–130 × 10–20 mm, ovate to narrow ovate, apices tapering, margins regularly and deeply toothed. **Sori** up to 10 mm long, reaching margins at indentations.

SIMILAR TAXA

Most likely to be confused with *A. obtusatum* with which it frequently grows and sometimes hybridises with. From that species it differs by its prominently and regularly toothed pinnules with tapering rather than blunt apices, and by the sori which reach the margins at the pinnule indentations.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (uncommon, known only from Bluff Hill and at Sandy point, Invercargill), Stewart Island/Rakiura, Snares Islands/Tini Heke, Chatham Islands, Auckland Islands.

HABITAT

Coastal. A species of exposed sites on rocky headlands, cliff faces and at the margins of coastal shrubland. Usually found growing with and amongst *Asplenium obtusatum*.

THREATS

Aside from its mainland occurrences near Invercargill this species is not threatened. However nowhere is it common, the largest populations are probably on the Auckland Islands.

GENUS

Asplenium

FAMILY

Aspleniaceae

AUTHORITY

Asplenium scleroprium Hombr.

SYNONYMS

Asplenium aucklandicum (Hook.f.) Crookes; *Asplenium lucidum* var. *aucklandicum* (Hook.f.) Allan; *Asplenium obtusatum* var. *scleroprium* G.M.Thomson; *Asplenium flaccidum* var. *aucklandicum* Hook.f.; *Asplenium lucidum* var. *scleroprium* (Hombr.) T.Moore; *Asplenium scleroprium* Hombr.



At Invercargill (January). Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



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

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Unknown

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

ASPSCL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 288

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, Sp

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Sparse

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

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

Fact Sheet prepared for the NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (12 August 2006). Description based on Brownsey (1977).

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

27 May 2026