

# Austroblechnum colensoi

## COMMON NAME

Colenso's hard fern, peretao, petako

## SYNONYMS

*Blechnum patersonii* (R.Br.) Mett. sensu Allan 1961; *Lomaria patersonii* R.Br. var. *elongata* sensu Cheeseman; *Lomaria heterophylla* Colenso; *Blechnum patersonii* var. *elongatum* (Blume) Domin; *Lomaria colensoi* Hook.f. in Hook.; *Blechnum colensoi* (Hook. f.) N.A. Wakef.

## FAMILY

Blechnaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Austroblechnum colensoi* (Hook.f.) Gasper et V.A.O.Dittrich

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

## NVS CODE

BLECOL

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 122

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North (from Warawara Forest south), South, Stewart, Chatham and Auckland Islands.

## HABITAT

Coastal to montane. Usually within seepages on shaded steep banks, rock overhangs and fringing river gorges; also on sodden ground within cloud forest



Mangaone Track. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



Smith Creek, Tararua Forest Park.  
Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe

## FEATURES

Stout fern of damp, shaded places, producing numerous cartilaginous to coriaceous fronds up to 1 m long (usually much less). Rhizomes short-creeping, scaly. Sterile frond stipes 60-400 mm long, base covered in dark red-black to black scales, laminae narrow elliptic, elliptic to almost rhomboid, undivided, 100-350(-800) x 25-600 mm, dark green to glaucous green above, paler beneath, cartilaginous or coriaceous. Sterile pinnae 1-10-paired, 100-200(-800) x 20-40(-80) mm, of similar size except for basal pairs which are reduced to margin flanges, apices tapering, margins smooth, glabrous, bases decurrent. Fertile fronds similar to sterile in stature, extremely slender, the terminal pinnae distinctly larger than the rest.

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Austroblechnum colensoi* has no close relatives in New Zealand, being most similar to *A. patersonii* of Australia, with which it was once included. It is easily recognised by the dark glaucous green to very dark green sparingly and broadly divided fronds, which are a marked contrast to the very slender fertile fronds

## FLOWERING

Not applicable (spore producing)

## FLOWER COLOURS

No flowers

## FRUITING

Not applicable (spore producing)

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Very slow growing. Requires heavily shaded, cool conditions, in permanently moist soil. Will not tolerate drying out.

## THREATS

Not Threatened but very uncommon north of Auckland

## ETYMOLOGY

**colensoi**: Named after William Colenso (7 November 1811 - 10 February 1899) who was a Cornish Christian missionary to New Zealand, and also a printer, botanist, explorer and politician.

## TAXONOMIC INFORMATION

Perrie et al. (2014) advocated for a broadened circumscription of Blechnaceae whereby a number of genera traditionally recognized as distinct from *Blechnum* were merged within it. However, this view has not met with universal acceptance (see de Gasper et al. 2016) and does not seem to be followed worldwide (PPG 2016). From a New Zealand perspective the decision to merge *Doodia* in *Blechnum*, and rejection of *Diploblechnum* has not been universally accepted either e.g., Wilcox & Warden (2017), and as such it is considered appropriate to follow world opinion and accept the taxonomy of de Gasper et al. (2016) and recommendations of the PPG (2016). See also the comments by Pyner (2017).

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet by P.J. de Lange 7 March 2006. Description based on Brownsey and Dodsworth (2000) supplemented with observations made from herbarium specimens

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Brownsey, P.J.; Smith-Dodsworth, J.C. 2000: New Zealand ferns and allied plants. David Bateman Ltd, Auckland  
Gasper, A.L.; de Oliveira Dittrich, V.A.; Smith A.R.; Salino, A. 2016: A classification for Blechnaceae (Polypodiales: Polypodiopsida): New genera, resurrected names, and combinations. *Phytotaxa* 275: 191-227.

Perrie, L.R.; Wilson, R.K.; Shepherd, L.D.; Ohlsen, D.J.; Batty, E.L.; Brownsey, P.J.; Bayly, M.J. 2014: Molecular phylogenetics and generic taxonomy of Blechnaceae ferns. *Taxon* 63(4): 745-758.

PPG 1: The Pteridophyte Phylogeny Group 2016: A community-derived classification for extant lycophytes and ferns. *Journal of Systematics and Evolution* 54: 563-603.

Pyner, T. 2017: A new classification of *Blechnum*. British Pteridological Society.

<https://ebps.org.uk/new-classification-blechnum/>

Wilcox, M.; Warden, J. 2017: Botany of Hillsborough coast bush reserves, Manukau Harbour, Auckland. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 72: 32-46.

### **NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION**

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Austroblechnum colensoi* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network.

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/austroblechnum-colensoi/> (Date website was queried)

### **MORE INFORMATION**

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/austroblechnum-colensoi/>