Austroblechnum lanceolatum

COMMON NAMES
lance fern, nini, rereti

BIOSTATUS
Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Ferns

FLOWER COLOURS
No flowers

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Rhizome erect to suberect. **Fronds** dimorphic, 0.12–0.65 m long, 20–100 mm wide, emergent fronds green, often tinged pinkish, mature fronds dark green, often tinged maroon. **Stipe** 0.02–0.15 m long, stramineous, becoming purple-black towards base; scales linear-lanceolate, subulate, broadly based, entire, reddish-brown. **Lamina** narrowly linear-lanceolate, pinnate with 17–40 or more pairs of pinnae. **Rachis and costae** stramineous, often dark purplish towards base on undersurface, glabrous or with very sparse short acuminate red-brown scales. **Sterile pinnae** oblong, weakly falcate, obtuse or acuminate, 15–32 × 5–10 mm, adnate with broad bases; margins crenate to serrate; basal pinnae shorter, more obtuse. **Fertile pinnae** linear, 12.0–45.0 × 1.0–2.5 mm, reduced and often sterile towards lamina base.

SIMILAR TAXA
Austroblechnum lanceolatum and *A. norfolkianum* are a species pair that need further taxonomic investigation. Exact distinctions between these species are difficult. Chambers & Farrant (1998) suggest that this is due to hybridisim but the basis for that suggestion is not clear. Most field botanists distinguish these two species on the basis of distribution and ecology with *A. norfolkianum* known only from northern New Zealand where it is mostly found on offshore islands. In this area it is typically found on rodent-free, “sea bird” islands where it is a conspicuous member of the shaded forest floor of petrel colonies as well as the more usual shaded bank and cliff habitats. *Austroblechnum norfolkianum* usually has brighter green, succulent fronds without the darker pink or maroon pigmentation often seen in *A. lanceolatum*, and the pinna of *A. norfolkianum* are consistently falcate (those of *A. lanceolatum* less often so), while the fertile fronds of *A. norfolkianum* are said to be shorter than sterile ones (but this is not always the case). However, none of these characters can be consistently applied. On the Kermadec islands only *A. norfolkianum* is known. *Austroblechnum lanceolatum* is easily distinguished from *A. membranaceum* (with which it often grows) by its larger size and longer, narrower pinna.

DISTRIBUTION
Indigenous. New Zealand: North Island, South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura, Chatham Islands. Also Australia and some Pacific Islands



Blechnum chambersii. Photographer: Wayne Bennett, Licence: CC BY-NC.



HABITAT
Coastal to montane. Usually inhabiting forested areas where it commony grows along shaded river and streams sides, or within the spray zone of waterfalls; or forms a dominant part of the ground cover in riparian forest. It also very common in coastal and lowland forest on shaded cliff faces. It becomes especially luxuriant in limestone country whereit is often a conspicuous fern of cave entrances and overhangs.

Left - fertile frond, right - sterile frond.
Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

GENUS
Austroblechnum

FAMILY
Blechnaceae

AUTHORITY
Austroblechnum lanceolatum (R.Br.) Gasper et V.A.O.Dittrich

SYNONYMS
Blechnum lanceolatum (R. Br.) J. W. Sturm; Spicanta lanceolata (R.Br.) Kuntze; Stegania lanceolata R.Br.; Struthiopteris lanceolata (R.Br.) Ching; Lomaria doodioides Brack.; Lomaria lanceolata (R.Br.) Spreng.; Blechnum aggregatum Tindale; Blechnum doodioides (Brack.) Brownlie; Blechnum chambersii Tindale

TAXONOMIC NOTES
Perrie et al. (2014) advocated for a broadened circumscription of Blechnaceae whereby a number of genera traditionally recognised as distinct from *Blechnum* were merged within it. However, this view has not met with universal acceptance (see 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 Gasper et al. (2016) and recommendations of the PPG (2016).

ENDEMIC TAXON
No

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
N.A.

FRUITING
N.A.

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown from fresh spores. Prefers a deep, moist soil in shaded conditions. Responds well ot regular applications of lime.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
FACU: Facultative Upland
Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).

NVS CODE
BLECHA

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 66

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO
2012 | Not Threatened
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened
Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT Help
Current regional threat status assessments prepared according to Crisp et al. (2025) are displayed when available. The Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland" Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.
Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened Help
Current regional threat status assessments prepared according to Crisp et al. (2025) are displayed when available. The Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025" Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.
Northland: 2026 | Regionally Not Threatened Help
Current regional threat status assessments prepared according to Crisp et al. (2025) are displayed when available. The Northland conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation status of indigenous vascular plants in Northland | Taitokerau" Ford et al. 2026 report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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Gasper AL, de Oliveira Dittrich VA, Smith AR, Salino A. 2016. A classification for Blechnaceae (Polypodiales: Polypodiopsida): New genera, resurrected names, and combinations. *Phytotaxa 275*: 191–227. https://doi.org/10.11646/phytotaxa.275.3.1.
Perrie LR, Wilson RK, Shepherd LD, Ohlsen DJ, Batty EL, Brownsey PJ, Bayly MJ. 2014. Molecular phylogenetics and generic taxonomy of Blechnaceae ferns. *Taxon 63(4)*: 745–758. https://doi.org/10.12705/634.13.
PPG 1: The Pteridophyte Phylogeny Group 2016. A community-derived classification for extant lycophytes and ferns. *Journal of Systematics and Evolution 54*: 563–603. https://doi.org/10.1111/jse.12229.
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Wilcox M, Warden J. 2017. Botany of Hillsborough coast bush reserves, Manukau Harbour, Auckland. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal 72*: 32–46.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (19 September 2012). Description adapted from Chambers & Farrant (1998)

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/austroblechnum-lanceolatum/

PDF DATE

25 August 2026