

Austroblechnum penna-marina subsp. alpina

COMMON NAME

little hard fern, alpine hard fern

SYNONYMS

Struthiopteris distans (Colenso) Ching; *Lomaria pumila* Raoul; *Spicanta pumila* (Raoul) Kuntze; *Stegania alpina* R.Br.; *Lomaria distans* Colenso; *Lomaria linearis* Colenso; *Lomaria parvifolia* Colenso; *Blechnum hillii* C.Chr.; *Blechnum parvifolium* (Colenso) C.Chr.; *Lomaria alpina* (R.Br.) Spreng.; *Blechnum alpinum* (R.Br.) Mett.; *Blechnum penna-marina* subsp. *alpina* (R.Br.) T.C.Chambers et P.A.Farrant

FAMILY

Blechnaceae

AUTHORITY

Austroblechnum penna-marina subsp. *alpina* (R.Br.) A.R.Field

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

NVS CODE

BLEPEN

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 66

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: North, South, Stewart, Chatham, Antipodes, Auckland, Campbell Islands. Also Macaquarie Island, Australia, South America and several other circum-Antarctic islands.

HABITAT

Coastal to alpine (mostly montane to alpine in the northern part of range, and scarce north of the Bay of Plenty and the Waikato) in open forest, subalpine scrub, grassland, alpine herbfield, turf (including coastal turf) and in moss field on the shaded sites of rock outcrops.



Tongariro. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Tongariro. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth

FEATURES

Rhizome creeping. Fronds dimorphic, 40–120 × 6–12 mm. Stipe 15–200 mm long, dark red-brown at base, usually becoming stramineous towards lamina; scales somewhat bullate, linear to ovate, entire, red-brown. Lamina lanceolate, pinnate, with 4–34 pairs of pinnae; rachis and costae stramineous; scales mainly on lower surface, small, sparse, acuminate, entire, brown to red-brown; sterile pinnae oblong-obtuse or somewhat triangular, 3.5–8.0 × 2.0–4.2 mm, adnate with broad bases, contiguous; margins entire; basal pinnae shorter, rounder; fertile pinnae linear and somewhat falcate, 3.6–6.8 × 1.0–2.5 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

None. Easily recognised by the small size, narrow sterile fronds; erect, narrow fertile fronds, and extensively creeping, turf-forming habit.

FLOWERING

N.A.

FLOWER COLOURS

No flowers

FRUITING

N.A.

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from spores and by the division of established plants. Does well in shade or the open but prefers a damp soil. An excellent ground cover fern.

ETYMOLOGY

penna-marina: Sea-pen; from the Latin *penna* and *marinus*, like the polyp 'sea-pen'

alpina: From the Latin *alpes* 'the Alps', refers to plants growing in mountainous areas

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).

There appears to be no valid combination for *Blechnum penna-marina* subsp. *alpina* (R.Br.) T.C.Chambers et P.A.Farrant in *Austroblechnum*.

ATTRIBUTION

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

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Chambers, T.C.; Farrant, P.A. 1998: Blechnaceae. Flora of Australia 48: 359–384. ABRS/CSIRO Australia, Victoria
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.

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

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NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/austroblechnum-penna-marina-subsp-alpina/>