Dicksonia fibrosa

COMMON NAME
Wheki-ponga, wheki-kohounga, golden tree fern, kuripaka

SYNONYMS
Dicksonia sparmanniana Colenso; Dicksonia antarctica var. fibrosa
(Colenso) Kirk; Dicksonia fibrosa var. microcarpa (Colenso) C.Chr.;
Balantium fibrosum (Colenso) Fée; Dicksonia antarctica sensu Hook.f.;
Dicksonia microcarpa Colenso

FAMILY
Dicksoniaceae

AUTHORITY
Dicksonia fibrosa Colenso

FLORA CATEGORY
Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Ferns

NVS CODE
DICFIB

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 130

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened

BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Stout tree fern up to 10 m tall. Trunk solitary, dense, made of red-brown
interwoven rootlets, Fronds forming dense crown, dying and leaving a
tidy, persistent skirt beneath crown.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. North, South, Stewart, and Chatham islands. Uncommon north
of the Waikato River and Coromandel Peninsula

HABITAT
Coastal to montane, Usually in forested situations, often in riparian sites
or at gulley heads.
FEATURES
Stout, non-rhizomatous tree ferns, up to 10 m tall. Trunk up to 1 m diameter, very dense, composed of tightly interwoven, red-brown rootlets, entirely without aerial buds. Fronds numerous, persistent in death, and forming a dense, pendent skirt; in life erect and arching, forming a dense, tight crown 1.2–2.8–3.6 m long, 300–480(–600) mm wide. Stipes 100(–300) mm long, pale brown to red-brown (sometimes golden-brown), smooth, base densely clad with persistent, soft, light red-brown hairs; immature rachises initially clad in soft, pale brown hairs, otherwise glabrate. Lamina (0.9–)2.5–3.3 m long, lanceolate, (2–)3–4-pinnate, abaxially glossy dark green, adaxially paler, harshly coriaceous, primary pinnae 150–280(–300) mm long, lanceolate, long tapering, ± acuminate; secondary pinnae 40–50 mm long, lanceolate, close-set to ± overlapping. Barren pinnules 5 mm long, subfalcate, acute, toothed or entire, widened and confluent at base, shallowly concavo-convex; fertile pinnules rounded, concavo-convex lobes. Sorus ± ovoid to rounded, terminating veins at fertile pinnae margins; sporangia on raised receptacle, partially obscured by in rolled pinnae margin, and submembranous inner indusium. Spores golden brown to red-brown.

SIMILAR TAXA
Dicksonia fibrosa is easily recognised by its non-rhizomatous tree fern growth habit; dense, stout trunk (reaching up to 1 m diameter) and comprised of thickly interwoven red-brown rootlets, and never bearing aerial buds; by the smooth stipes; and by the dead fronds forming a dense, pendent, persistent tidy skirt.

FLOWERING
Not applicable - spore producing

FLOWER COLOURS
No flowers

FRUITING
Not applicable - spore producing

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown from fresh spores, and also by transplants of mature trunked specimens. A beautiful but slow-growing species that does best in cooler climates, in a damp, humus-enriched soil.

ETYMOLOGY
dicksonia: After James Dickson (1738-1822), British botanist and nurseryman
fibrosa: Fibrous, from the Latin fibra; matted fibrous trunk

WHERE TO BUY
Commonly available from most mainline and specialist native plant nurseries.

TAXONOMIC NOTES
Very closely allied to the Australian Dicksonia antarctica R.Br.

ATTRIBUTION
Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (10 October 2010). Description by P.J. de Lange

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION
Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): Dicksonia fibrosa Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/dicksonia-fibrosa/ (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION