Diplazium australe

BIOSTATUS
Native

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

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Ferns

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Terrestrial tufted ferns (often deciduous in cooler areas). **Rhizome** to 80 mm long, erect over time forming a short, woody caudex, initially covered with dull dark brown to black scales. **Fronds** arcuate, glabrous membranous, brittle, dark green, groove of rachis open at junctions with grooves of pinna midribs. **Stipe** 150–800 mm long, black and scaly at the base, deeply 3-grooved. **Lamina** 3-pinnate, 0.25–1.2 × 0.2–0.9 m, broadly deltoid. **Pinnules** 5–25 × 2–10 mm, oblong; base broadly attached to axis; margins bluntly toothed or shallowly lobed less than half-way to costule, abaxially decurrent; apex obtuse. **Sori** 2–3 mm long, 3–5 per pinnule, elongated along one side of a vein, mostly single, sometimes paired along both sides; indusium pale brown, elongated, attached to vein on one side, free edge toothed, fragile.



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



Waihora Stream, Wairarapa. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 25/02/2014, Licence: CC BY.

SIMILAR TAXA
Diplazium australe is sometimes confused with *Deparia petersenii* subsp. *congrua*, with which it often grows, partly because both *Diplazium* and *Deparia* have sori arranged in a herring bone pattern, a pattern which may also lead to confusion with *Asplenium*. However both *Diplazium* and *Deparia* differ from *Asplenium* by the sori which are paired back-to-back along the veins. *Diplazium* differs from *Deparia* by its much larger, more divided, glabrous fronds and by the groove of the rachis which is open and confluent with the grooves of the pinna midribs (rather than not open at junctions with grooves of pinna midribs).

DISTRIBUTION
Indigenous. New Zealand: North Island, South Island (though mostly absent from the drier eastern side of both islands, reaching its apparent southern limits in the west near Greymouth and in the east in the Marlborough Sounds). Also Australia (eastern Queensland, eastern New South Wales, southern Victoria and Tasmania) and Norfolk Island.

HABITAT
Coastal, lowland to montane forested habitats, common in alluvial forest, along river flats, in gullies,or swamp forest. Often found in rough pasture or under willows. Often found in urban areas.

GENUS
Diplazium

FAMILY
Athyriaceae

AUTHORITY
Diplazium australe (R.Br.) N.A.Wakef.

SYNONYMS
Allantodia australis R.Br., Athyrium australe (R.Br.) C.Presl; Athyrium umbrosum subp. australe (R.Br.) C.Chr.; Athyrium umbrosum var. australe (R.Br.) Domin; Athyrium brownii (J.Sm.) J.Sm.; Athyrium umbrosum sensu Cheeseman; Asplenium australe (R.Br.) Brack.; Asplenium brownii J.Sm.; Asplenium umbrosum sensu G.M.Thomson; Allantodia tenera R.Br.

TAXONOMIC NOTES
Family follows Rothfels et al. (2012).

ENDEMIC TAXON
No

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Minute spores are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easy from spores and rooted pieces. Very fast growing and inclined to become weedy. Prefers a shaded site but copes well in full sun provided it is planted in permanently damp ground. In cooler parts of the country it dies down to the rhizome during winter.

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

CULTIVATION
Occasionally available from mainline and specialist native plant nurseries

STATUS NOTES
This species was once considered to be very uncommon. It appears to have flourished and expanded its New Zealand range as a result of human disturbance and is now one of our most widespread, weedy, indigenous, urban ferns.

ETYMOLOGY
diplazium: From Greek diplasios ‘double’, referring to the double covering over the spores
australe: Southern, from the Latin australis

NVS CODE
DIPAUS

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 246

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
The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the “Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland” Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Brownsey PJ, Smith-Dodsworth JC. 2000. New Zealand Ferns and Allied Plants. David Bateman, Auckland, NZ. 168 p.

Jones DL. 1998. Athyriaceae. *Flora of Australia 48, Ferns Gymnosperms and allied groups*: 418–429. ABRS/CSIRO Victoria, Australia.

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.

Rothfels CJ, Sundue MA, Kuo Li-Y, Larsson A, Kato M, Schuettpelz E, Pryer KM. 2012. A revised family-leve classification for eupolypod II ferns (Polypodiidae: Polypodiales). *Taxon 61(3)*: 515–533. https://doi.org/10.1002/tax.613003.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (18 January 2012). Description adapted from Brownsey & Smith-Dodsworth (2000). Family follows Rothfels et al. (2012).

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/diplazium-australe/

PDF DATE

25 May 2026