

Hiya distans

BIOSTATUS

Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: TO

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

FLOWER COLOURS

No flowers

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Rhizome long-creeping, 1.0–2.25 mm diam., abundantly covered in dark red-brown hairs 2.0–3.5 mm long, giving rise to stipes at intervals of 30–70 mm. **Stipes** 50–500–(600) mm long, 0.75–1.25 mm diam., dark red-brown, bearing a few scattered red-brown hairs at base. **Laminae** narrowly elliptic to elliptic or ovate, (150)–250–600–(950) × 90–300–(400) mm, rather stiff and harsh to the touch, bipinnate at apex to almost tripinnate at base (truly tripinnate in largest specimens). **Rachis** dark red-brown becoming paler only at the very apex, bearing scattered pale brown hairs. **Primary pinnae** in 20–40 pairs (more in very large specimens), opposite or subopposite arising at c. 90° to rachis, the longest at or below middle 50–200 × 17–60 mm; lowest pinnae (20)–40–120–(200) mm apart, middle pinnae (10)–20–50–(60) mm apart, narrowly ovate or triangular, midrib narrowly winged throughout; lowest pair orientated at 90° to plane of frond in largest specimens. **Secondary pinnae** sessile or shortly stalked, ovate to narrowly ovate, longest 8–30–(40) × 4–7–(10) mm, doubly serrate with 3–9 primary serrations on each side of longest secondary pinna (divided to the midrib in tripinnate forms); those on lower primary pinnae ± equal in length, only decreasing in size towards the very apex of each pinna. **Veins** reaching margin at a sinus (emarginate). **Hairs** virtually absent on upper surface of frond, a few scattered pale-brown non-glandular hairs on underside of costae and midribs. **Sori** in 2–8 pairs on longest secondary pinnae, marginal, terminating veins on sides of ultimate segments, protected by reflexed, incised membranous flaps, dark brown, ± smooth.

SIMILAR TAXA

None.

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: North, South (Marlborough, North-West Nelson and North Westland with one record from Banks Peninsula) and Chatham Islands. Also Australia (Tasmania and some Bass Strait Islands). Sparingly naturalised on Norfolk Island (de Lange et al. 2005)

HABITAT

Hiya distans is usually found in swampy areas, especially on peat, or in soils with a deep humus layer. In forest situations (or disturbed forest margins) it often colonises decomposing logs. Very occasionally it is found as a weed of garden centres and nurseries, plants often arising from the peat that is bought into these areas to use as potting mix.



Kennedy Bay, August. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Kopouatai Peat Dome. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 17/07/2007, Licence: CC BY.

GENUS

Hiya

FAMILY

Dennstaedtiaceae

AUTHORITY

Hiya distans (Hook.) Brownsey & Perrie

SYNONYMS

Hypolepis distans Hook.

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

Not applicable—spore producing

FRUITING

Not applicable—spore producing

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh spores and by division of established plants. Should be planted in a humus rich (peat is ideal), damp soil. Does best in a warm sunny place but once established tolerant of a range of situations of moisture levels.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY

distans: Distant (widely spaced female flowers)

NVS CODE

HIYDIS

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 56

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: TO

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Declining | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT, PF, Sp, TO 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.

Otago: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, NR, Sp Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "[Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025](#)" Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

- Brownsey PJ, Chinnock RJ. 1984. A Taxonomic revision of the New Zealand species of *Hypolepis*. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 22(1): 43–80. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.1984.10425234>.
- de Lange PJ, Gardner RO, Sykes WR, Crowcroft GM, Cameron EK, Stalker F, Christian ML, Braggins JE. 2005. Vascular flora of Norfolk Island: some additions and taxonomic notes. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 43(4): 563–596. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.2005.9512975>.
- Perrie LR, Shepherd LD, Brownsey PJ. 2018. *Hiya distans* (Dennstaedtiaceae), a new combination for an Australasian fern previously classified in *Hypolepis*. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 56(4): 406–414. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.2018.1526807>.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (8 November 2012). Description from Brownsey & Chinnock (1984).

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/hiya-distans/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026