# Hymenophyllum bivalve

## COMMON NAMES
filmy fern

## BIOSTATUS
Native

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

## CATEGORY
Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS
Ferns

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Delicate, mat-forming terrestrial or low epiphytic fern. **Rhizomes** long-creeping, rather gracile, wiry, pliant, sparsely hairy; hairs dark brown, appressed. **Frond** pendulous in epiphytic plants otherwise with erect stipes and laminae lying horizontal. **Stipes** well spaced on rhizomes, 30–150–(180) mm long, slender, not-winged ± glabrous (sometimes with sparse hairs near base and apex); rachises narrowly winged throughout. **Laminae** 60–200 × 30–160 mm, light green, ± glabrous, broadly triangular to broadly ovate with apex deflexed, deeply 3–4-pinnate, primary pinnae often up-curved. **Ultimate segments** linear, 0.3–1.5 mm wide, obtuse, margins shallowly toothed. **Sori** numerous, terminating ultimate segments, slightly sunken in lamina, many on each primary pinna. **Involucre** round to ovoid, bilabiate, almost divided almost to base, 0.8–1.5 mm long × 0.5–1.5 mm wide; base cuneate, only slightly immersed; indusial flaps entire, smooth-edged; receptacle included or slightly exserted. (Description adapted from Bostock & Spokes (1998) and Brownsey & Smith-Dodsworth (2000)).

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


Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 29/01/2012, Licence: CC BY.

## SIMILAR TAXA
Sterile plants are virtually impossible to distinguish from *Hymenophyllum multifidum* but when fertile this species is easily recognised by the much smaller sori which are held horizontally or slightly bent but never bent at 90° to the the frond as in *H. multifidum*. The fronds of *H. bivalve* are slightly larger than those of *H. multifidum*, brighter green, notably less prominently curled downwards, and the margins are more finely and less deeply toothed.

## DISTRIBUTION
Indigenous. New Zealand: North Island (from Campbells Bay (Auckland) south, though scarce north of Waikato), South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura, Chatham Islands, Auckland Islands. Also Australia (Queensland to New South Wales).

## HABITAT
Coastal to montane forest. Either terrestrial or a low epiphyte on tree trunks and exposed roots.

## GENUS
Hymenophyllum

## FAMILY
Hymenophyllaceae

## AUTHORITY
Hymenophyllum bivalve (G. Forst.) Sw.

## SYNONYMS
Meringium bivalve (G. Forst.) Copel.; Sphaerocionium bivalve (G.Forst.) C.Presl; Trichomanes bivalve G.Forst.; Hymenophyllum pyriforme Bosch; Hymenophyllum spathulatum Colenso

## ENDEMIC TAXON
No

## ENDEMIC GENUS
No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

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

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Difficult—should not be removed from the wild

## ETYMOLOGY
**hymenophyllum**: Membranous leaf, from the Greek humen and phullon

## NVS CODE
HYMBIV

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 44

## 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 Threatened – Regionally Critical | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, SO 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 Not Threatened 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
Bostock PD, Spokes TM. 1998. Hymenophyllaceae. *Flora of Australia 48, Ferns Gymnosperms and allied groups*: 116–148. ABRS/CSIRO Victoria, Australia.
Brownsey PJ, Smith-Dodsworth JC. 2000. New Zealand Ferns and Allied Plants. David Bateman, Auckland, NZ. 168 p.
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.

## ATTRIBUTION
Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (17 April 2011). Description adapted from Bostock & Spokes (1998) and Brownsey & Smith-Dodsworth (2000).

## MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/hymenophyllum-bivalve/

## PDF DATE

08 June 2026