Hymenophyllum dilatatum

COMMON NAMES
filmy fern, matua mauku

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

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

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Ferns

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Epiphytic (very rarely terrestrial) fern. **Rhizomes** long-creeping, gracile, wiry when fresh very brittle when dry. **Stipes** often widely spaced on rhizomes, 20–150–(200) mm long, stout, glabrous, distinctly though narrowly winged for part of length; rachises broadly winged throughout. **Laminae** 80–400–(800) × 40–150–(160) mm, ovate, narrowly ovate to lanceolate, 3–4-pinnate, bright to dark green, glabrous. **Ultimate segments** rather broad, margins smooth, plane. **Sori** terminating ultimately segments, slightly sunk in lamina, many on each primary pinna. **Indusial flaps** smooth. (Description adapted from Brownsey & Smith-Dodsworth (2000)).

SIMILAR TAXA
Easily distinguished from all other *Hymenophyllum* by the glabrous, smooth margined fronds; by the conspicuous broad, flat wing bordering much of the stipe and all of the rachis; and by the very broad pinnae.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic, New Zealand: North Island, South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura, Chatham Islands, Auckland Islands. Widespread except for the drier parts of the eastern South Island.

HABITAT
Coastal to montane in forest. Usually epiphytic or on fallen logs and banks, Very rarely on the forest floor or on boulders.

GENUS
Hymenophyllum

FAMILY
Hymenophyllaceae

AUTHORITY
Hymenophyllum dilatatum (G. Forst.) Sw.

SYNONYMS
Mecodium dilatatum (G. Forst.) Copel.; Sphaerocionium dilatatum (G.Forst.) C.Presl; Trichomanes dilatatum G.Forst.; Diplooephyllum dilatatum (G.Forst.) Bosch; Leptocionium sororium C.Presl

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 01/08/2006, Licence: CC BY.

Sori. Stokes Valley. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 01/08/2006, Licence: CC BY.

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

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
UPL: Obligate Upland
Rarely is a hydrophyte, almost always in uplands (non-wetlands).

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

NVS CODE
HYMDIL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 72

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | Not Threatened
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.
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
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 Brownsey & Smith-Dodsworth (2000).

MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/hymenophyllum-dilatatum/

PDF DATE
25 May 2026