

Hymenophyllum pulcherrimum

COMMON NAMES

tufted filmy fern

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tufted mostly epiphytic fern. **Rhizomes** erect, short-creeping, sparsely to densely covered in red, bristly hairs. **Stipes** 30–150 mm long, rather stout, glabrescent; stipes and rachises winged almost to base, wing thickness variable for entire length. **Fronds** pendulous, pale green, glabrous. **Laminae** 100–400–(600) × 40–150 mm. ovate, narrowly elliptic to elliptic, 3–4-pinnate. **Ultimate segments** oblong, undulose (weakly to strongly so), margins smooth. **Sori** arising on short branches near the ends of the ultimate segments; many on each primary pinna. Involucre ovoid to ellipsoid; indusial flaps entire.

SIMILAR TAXA

Easily recognised by the tufted growth habit, large pendulous pale green, glabrous, crinkly (wavy) fronds, and by the smooth margins of the stipe and rachis wing and smooth pinnae margins.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (from Te Moehau and Mt Pirongia south), South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura, Auckland Islands.

HABITAT

Lowland to montane (mostly montane in the northern part of its range), in closed forest. Usually epiphytic, rarely found growing on rocks.

GENUS

Hymenophyllum

FAMILY

Hymenophyllaceae

AUTHORITY

Hymenophyllum pulcherrimum Colenso

SYNONYMS

Mecodium pulcherrimum (Colenso) Copel.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No



Aorangi Forest Park. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 08/09/2007, Licence: CC BY.



Sori. Herepai Ridge, Tararua Forest Park. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 08/03/2008, Licence: CC BY.

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

pulcherrimum: Very beautiful; from the Latin pulcherrimus

NVS CODE

HYMPUL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 22

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

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 (20 April 2011). Description adapted from Brownsey & Smith-Dodsworth (2000)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/hymenophyllum-pulcherrimum/>

PDF DATE

08 June 2026