

Hymenophyllum rarum

COMMON NAME

filmy fern

SYNONYMS

Mecodium rarum (R. Br.) Copel.; Hymenophyllum imbricatum Colenso;
Hymenophyllum semibivalve Hook. et Grev.

FAMILY

Hymenophyllaceae

AUTHORITY

Hymenophyllum rarum R. Br.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

NVS CODE

HYMRAR

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 72$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: North, South, Stewart, Chatham and Auckland Islands. Also Australia

HABITAT

Coastal to montane. Common throughout the country in close forest, scrub, on shaded cliff faces, amongst boulders and in rubble slopes. Rather drought tolerant and often found growing in very exposed sites.



Kaitoke, Upper Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



Upper Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe

FEATURES

Terrestrial or epiphytic, aromatic fern forming extensive, interwoven, creeping patches. Rhizomes long-creeping, very thin, brittle. Fronds pale grey-green (glaucous). Stipes 20–70 mm long, very thin, wiry when fresh, very brittle when dry, glabrous, not winged; rachises very narrowly winged in upper part. Laminae 20–120 × 10–30 mm, narrowly ovate, narrowly elliptic, rarely deltoid, usually 2-pinnate, membranous, glabrous. Ultimate segments oblong, imbricate, margins smooth. Sori terminating the uppermost ultimate segments, ovoid completely immersed in lamina, few on each primary pinna, mostly confined to upper part of frond. Indusium flaps entire. Description adapted from Brownsey & Smith-Dodsworth (2000).

SIMILAR TAXA

Easily recognised by the peculiar grey-green, small, membranous fronds; by the smooth margins of the pinnae, ultimate segments and indusia; and by the sori which are sunk within the uppermost segments of the uppermost pinnae. Australian plants of *H. rarum* (which include the type of this species) are rather different differing by the non-aromatic, widely spaced rather than imbricating pale green, pinnae. The sori of Australian *H. rarum* are almost not wholly immersed within the pinnae nor confined to the uppermost segments of the uppermost pinnae. It seems likely that New Zealand plants referred to *H. rarum* may warrant recognition as a separate species. Further study into this matter is needed.

FLOWERING

N.A.

FLOWER COLOURS

No flowers

FRUITING

N.A.

LIFE CYCLE

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

rarum: Thin leaved; from the Latin rarus

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (20 April 2011). Description adapted from Brownsey & Smith-Dodsworth (2000).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Brownsey, P.J.; Smith-Dodsworth, J.C. 2000: New Zealand Ferns and Allied Plants. Auckland, David Bateman
Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics 11: 285–309

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/hymenophyllum-rarum/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

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