Hymenophyllum revolutum

COMMON NAMES
filmy fern

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

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

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Ferns

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Epiphytic and/or terrestrial fern forming, in ideal situations, extensive turf-like patches. **Rhizomes** long-creeping, very thin, much-branched and interwoven, wiry when fresh, brittle when dry. **Fronds** light green. **Stipes** 5–30 mm long, thin, brittle, glabrescent, not winged; rachis narrowly winged in upper portion. **Laminae** 10–90 × 5–20 mm, narrowly elliptic to ovate, 2–3-pinnate. **Ultimate segments** linear to oblong, often forked, margins deeply toothed. **Sori** on short winged branches near rachis, 1 on acroscopic margin of each primary pinnae. **Indusial flaps** deeply toothed, teeth irregular. (Description adapted from Brownsey & Smith-Dodsworth (2000)).

SIMILAR TAXA
Morphologically similar to *Hymenophyllum cupressiforme* and *H. peltatum*, species from which it is distinguished by its partially winged rachis and by the very deeply toothed indusial flaps.



Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 19/03/2017, Licence: CC BY.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand: North Island, South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura, Chatham Islands.



Upper Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 11/07/2006, Licence: CC BY.

HABITAT
Coastal to montane. Found throughout New Zealand usually in closed forest where it most commonly epiphytic but also found on rocks, cliff faces, fallen logs, on moss covered hummocks and sometimes on the ground.

GENUS
Hymenophyllum

FAMILY
Hymenophyllaceae

AUTHORITY
Hymenophyllum revolutum Colenso

SYNONYMS
Hymenophyllum tunbridgense var. cupressiforme sensu Hook.; Hymenophyllum pusillum Colenso; Hymenophyllum tunbridgense sensu A.Rich.; Hymenophyllum zeelandicum Bosch

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

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

WHERE TO BUY
Not commercially available

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

NVS CODE
HYMREV

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
Current regional threat status assessments prepared according to Crisp et al. (2025) are displayed when available. The 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
Current regional threat status assessments prepared according to Crisp et al. (2025) are displayed when available. The Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025" Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.
Northland: 2026 | Regionally Not Threatened Help
Current regional threat status assessments prepared according to Crisp et al. (2025) are displayed when available. The Northland conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation status of indigenous vascular plants in Northland | Taitokerau" Ford et al. 2026 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-revolutum/

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25 August 2026