

Hymenophyllum scabrum

COMMON NAMES

rough 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 widely spaced tufts of fronds along a long-creeping, slender but pliant and wiry sparsely to densely hairy rhizome. **Fron**d dark green to olive green. **Stipe** 40–150–(200) mm long, stout, not winged, densely covered in bristly hairs; rachises narrowly winged in upper part, covered in copious bristly hairs. **Laminae** 100–400 × 50–140 mm, ovate, ovate-deltoid, 3–4-pinnate, densely to sparsely bristly hairy when young. **Ultimate segments** linear, margins entire. **Sori** terminating ultimate segments, not sunk in lamina, many on each primary pinna. **Indusium** broadly ovoid to almost orbicular, abaxial surfaces smooth; indusial flaps minutely toothed.

SIMILAR TAXA

A distinctive species readily identified by the large, dark green or olive green ovate to ovate-deltoid fronds and conspicuously bristly hairy stipes. Drying and dried specimens usually faintly stain paper brown or yellow-brown.

DISTRIBUTION

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

HABITAT

Coastal to montane. Usually in closed forest where it may be epiphytic or found growing on rotting logs, on moss hummocks, boulders or on the ground. Occasionally found in closed scrub.

GENUS

Hymenophyllum

FAMILY

Hymenophyllaceae

AUTHORITY

Hymenophyllum scabrum A. Rich.

SYNONYMS

Mecodium scabrum (A. Rich.) Copel.; Sphaerocionium scabrum (A.Rich.) C.Presl; Diploophyllum scabrum (A.Rich.) Bosch; Sphaerocionium glanduliferum C.Presl;

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes



Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 31/07/2013, Licence: CC BY.



Scales on rachis; Bushy Park, Whanganui. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Date taken: 17/04/2013, Licence: CC BY-NC.

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

scabrum: Rough, covered with hard short rigid points

NVS CODE

HYMSCA

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 72, 144

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

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

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

