

Lindsaea linearis

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

FLOWER COLOURS

No flowers

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Terrestrial, tufted fern. **Rhizome** short- to long-creeping, c. 0.6–1.0 mm diameter; scales to 2 mm long, golden brown. **Fron**ds dimorphic. **Stipes** widely spaced 20–260 mm long in fertile fronds, shorter in sterile fronds, red-brown, purplish black or black. **Lamina** 50–250 × 5–15 mm long in fertile fronds shorter in sterile fronds, 1-pinnate, linear. **Pinnules** sessile to shortly stalked, gradually reduced towards apex, often more distant towards base. **Sterile pinnules** flabellate (asymmetrical or not) to diamond-shaped, to 6–10 × 3–6 mm wide, herbaceous; outer margin crenate or more deeply incised. **Fertile pinnules** flabellate to broadly cuneate, 3–5 × 4–7 mm, herbaceous to coriaceous; outer margin uneven. **Veins** free, 2–4× forked. **Sori** usually continuous; indusium 0.7–1.0 mm wide, not extending to margin, pale greenish, often strongly reflexed. **Spores** pale brown, smooth. (Description from Kramer & McCarthy (1998)).

SIMILAR TAXA

Easily distinguished from other *Lindsaea* species by the red-brown, purple-black to black stipes; dimorphic sterile/fertile narrowly pinnate fronds (the fertile fronds are typically erect and the sterile ones prostrate); and by the flabellate (fan-shaped) pinnae.

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: Manawatāwhi / Three Kings Islands, North Island (common from North Cape south to the Bay of Plenty, local south of here until Wellington where it is common), South Island (locally common in North-west Nelson, otherwise scarce), Stewart Island/Rakiura, Chatham Islands (abundant on Chatham Island (Rēkohu)). Also Australia and New Caledonia.

HABITAT

Coastal to lower montane. Usually in open ground (especially in gumland and pakihi), on clay pans, under light scrub and on the margins of bogs and swamps.

GENUS

Lindsaea

FAMILY

Lindsaeaceae



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AUTHORITY

Lindsaea linearis Sw.

SYNONYMS

Lindsaea linearis var. *trilobata* (Colenso) C.Chr.; *Adiantum lineare* (Sw.) Poir.; *Lindsaea lunata* Willd.; *Lindsaea trilobata* Colenso

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

Not applicable—spore producing

FRUITING

Not applicable—spore producing

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult—should not be removed from the wild

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

ETYMOLOGY

lindsaea: Named after John Lindsay, 19th century British surgeon who discovered fern spore

linearis: Linear (leaves)

NVS CODE

LINLIN

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 68

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

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 Data Deficient 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

Kramer KU, McCarthy PM. 1998. Lindsaeaceae. Flora of Australia 48: 228–240.

Kramer KU, McCarthy PM. 1998. Lindsaeaceae. *Flora of Australia 48, Ferns Gymnosperms and allied groups*: 228–240. ABRS/CSIRO Victoria, Australia.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by: P.J. de Lange (Updated 4 May 2011)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/lindsaea-linearis/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026