

Lycopodiella cernua

SYNONYMS

Palhinhaea cernua (L.) Franco et Vasc.; Palhinhaea polycephala (Colenso) Holub; Lycopodium cernuum L.; Lepidotis cernua (L.) P.Beauv.; Lycopodium polycephalum Colenso

FAMILY

Lycopodiaceae

AUTHORITY

Lycopodiella cernua (L.) Pic. Serm.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Lycophytes (clubmosses, selaginella, quillworts)

NVS CODE

LYCCER

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = c.200

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand. Kermadec, North, South, Chatham Islands (common from Te Pahi south to Lake Taupo thence scarce reaching a southern limit at about Okarito). Also Australia, Pacific Islands and throughout the tropics and subtropics.

HABITAT

Coastal to montane on clay banks, in gumland, on consolidated sand dunes, kauri clay podzols, road side banks, in thermal scrub and around active fumaroles and craters

FEATURES

Terrestrial (rarely epiphytic) scrambling plants. Main stem up to 8 m long, creeping or looping over ground and rooting at points of contact. Aerial stems arising between rooting points, usually 1 per loop, 0.3-1(-2) m tall, dendroid, erect, much-branched, occasionally climbing, with apices curled over, glabrous or hairy. Sterile leaves spirally arranged to subwhorled, clustered, 1.5-5.0 mm long, 0.2-1.0 mm wide, linear to narrowly triangular, acuminate, curved towards shoot apices, green to yellowish green or yellow. Strobili numerous, solitary, terminal and sessile, 5-15 mm long, yellow. Sporophylls imbricate, ovate, acuminate, pale yellow; margins ciliate. Description adapted from Chinnock (1998) and Brownsey & Smith-Dodsworth (2000).



Coromandel. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



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SIMILAR TAXA

Easily distinguished from all other New Zealand representatives of the family by the extensive, looping main stems, "furry" aerial stems, and drooping strobili

FLOWERING

N.A.

FLOWER COLOURS

No flowers

FRUITING

N.A.

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from rooted pieces but resents root disturbance so needs to be transplanted carefully. Once established *Lycopodiella cernua* is remarkably tolerant of dry conditions. This species is frost sensitive.

ETYMOLOGY

lycopodiella: Diminutive of *Lycopodium* (little wolf's-foot)

cernua: Drooping

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 16 March 2011. Description adapted from Chinnock (1998) and 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
Chinnock, R.J. 1998: *Lycopodiaceae*. *Flora of Australia* 48: 66-85.

CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/lycopodiella-cernua/>