

Macromitrium brevicaule

COMMON NAMES

moss

BIOSTATUS

Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2025 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: RR, SO

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Non-vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Mosses

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Autoicous, corticolous or saxicolous creeping moss forming dense mats coloured yellow-brown or greenish brown above, darker below. Branches very short, up to 5 mm long, crowded, very densely foliate, simple or fastigiately branched. Leaves c.2 mm long, rather fragile, crowded, closely spirally enrolled round the stem when dry; spreading when moist; lamina broadly oblong or ligulate, obtuse or subobtuse, mostly stoutly apiculate; margins plane and entire; nerves robust, projecting dorsally, usually excurrent as a very short stout apiculus. Upper cells 7-10 microns, subquadrate, chlorophyllose, lowly papillose, thin-walled; lower cells shortly rectangular or oval, pellucid and colourless, smooth, incrassate with the marginal cells occasionally narrowed and elongated. Perichaetial bracts not differentiated. Seta 2-3 mm long. Capsule c.1.5 mm long, ovate, narrowed at the mouth, indistinctly plicate. Peristome teeth 16, short, pale, papillose above and finely striolate below. Operculum with an erect subulate beak. Calyptra smooth, plicate, finely lobed at the base, yellow with a reddish-brown apex. Male inflorescences at the terminus of short branchlets

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. Australia and New Zealand. In New Zealand known from the Kermadec Islands (Raoul Island), northern North Island and adjacent offshore islands (mostly easterly from Te Paki to Hauturu (Clark Island) near Whangamata, and with two westerly records from Maungaraho Rock (near Tokatoka on the Wairoa River) and from Te Rokotai (South Head, Kaipara)) and Chatham Islands (Rekohu only).

SUBSTRATE DETAILS

Corticolous and saxicolous within coastal forest

THREATS

Not Threatened. However, this species is very uncommon in the New Zealand part of its range. It seems to be secure at the majority of its known sites.

GENUS

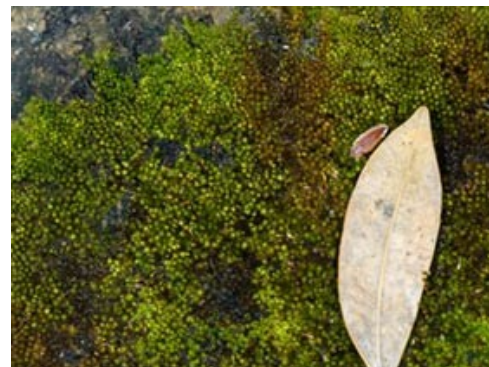
Macromitrium

FAMILY

Orthotrichaceae

AUTHORITY

Macromitrium brevicaule (Besch.) Broth.



Growing on rock in light shade. Surville Cliffs, North Cape. Photographer: A. J. Townsend, Date taken: 19/10/2009, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Growing on rock in light shade. Surville Cliffs, North Cape. Photographer: A. J. Townsend, Date taken: 19/10/2009, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SYNONYMS

Macromitrium subfragile Dixon et Sainsbury

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FRUITING

Although fruit has been seen insufficient information exists to provide any details on the timing of fruiting

ETYMOLOGY

brevicaule: With a short stem

NVS CODE

MACBRE

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2014 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: RR

2005 | Range Restricted | Qualifiers: S?O

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Vitt, D.H. 1983: The New Zealand species of the pantropical genus *Macromitrium* (Orthotrichaceae: Musci) taxonomy, phylogeny and phytogeography. *Journal of the Hattori Botanical Laboratory* 54: 1-94.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (5 November 2007). Description adapted from Vitt (1983).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Macromitrium brevicaule* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network.

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

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/macromitrium-brevicaule/>

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25 May 2026