Paesia scaberula

COMMON NAMES
lace fern, ring fern, scented fern, pig fern

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

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

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Ferns

FLOWER COLOURS
No flowers



Coromandel. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Coromandel. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Terrestrial ferns. **Rhizome** long-creeping, much branched, stiff and somewhat brittle, 1–2 mm diameter, chesnut-brown, densely clad in slender red-brown, bristly hairs. **Stipes** 50–400 × 1–2 mm, stiff, muricate to almost smooth, densely clade in slender, bristly, red-brown hairs (especially near base) and short, glandular, yellow hairs in upper portion. **Rhachis** strongly to slightly zig-zagged, strongly muricate to smooth. **Laminae** 2–3–4-pinnate, 100–800 × 50–350 mm, deltoid to ovate or elliptic, stiffly coriaceous to subcoriaceous, adaxially yellow-green to yellow, abaxially, covered by numerous, short, glandular hairs, midirbs bearing bristly red-brown hairs; veins obscure, free. **Pinnae** finely dissected, primary pinnae shortly stalked, 70–200 × 30–50 mm, ovate to lanceolate, acuminate. **Secondary pinnae** shortly stalked, up to 25 × 10 mm, lanceolate. **Segments** decurrent, pinnatisect to almost pinnate, up to 5 × 2 mm, narrow, sharply toothed or incised, often apiculate. **Sori** usually copious, extending along both margins of segments, but not reaching base or apex; true indusium delicate, often vestigial.

SIMILAR TAXA
Easily distinguished by the yellow-green to yellow, glandular sticky, finely dissected, fragrant fronds, zig-zagged rachises and elongated marginal sori, protected by an inrolled, scarious lamina on the outside of the ultimate segments and a membranous (sometimes almost vestigial) indusium on the inside of the ultimate segments.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand: Manawatāwhi / Three Kings Islands, North Island, South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura and Chatham Islands.

HABITAT
Coastal to montane. An often common fern of open or distrubed ground, rough pasture, grassland or reverting farmland—where it often is considered a serious pest.

GENUS
Paesia

FAMILY
Dennstaedtiaceae

AUTHORITY
Paesia scaberula (A.Rich.) Kuhn

SYNONYMS
Pteris scaberula A.Rich., Allosorus scaberulus (A.Rich.) C.Presl, Ornithopteris scaberula (A.Rich.) J.Sm., Pteris microphylla A.Cunn.

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
Not applicable—spore producing

FRUITING
Not applicable—spore producing

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
A weedy fern that often self establishes in gardens. Prefers a sunny, open situation and is tolerant of a range of soil types.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
FACU: Facultative Upland
Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY
paesia: After the Portuguese Duke fernando Dias Paes lele, commander in South America in the 17th Century
scaberula: A little roughened; from the Latin scaber, leaves

NVS CODE
PAESCA

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 52

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
Allan HH. 1961. Flora of New Zealand, Volume I. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Psilopsida, Lycopsida, Filicopsida, Gymnospermae, Dicotyledones. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 1085 p.
Brownsey PJ, Smith-Dodsworth JC. 2000. New Zealand Ferns and Allied Plants. David Bateman, Auckland, NZ. 168 p.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (8 November 2012). Description adapted from Allan (1961) and Brownsey & Smith-Dodsworth (2000).

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MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/paesia-scaberula/

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