

# Palhinhaea cernua

## SYNONYMS

*Palhinhaea polycephala* (Colenso) Holub; *Lycopodium cernuum* L.; *Lepidotis cernua* (L.) P.Beauv.; *Lycopodium polycephalum* Colenso; *Lycopodiella cernua* (L.) Pic. Serm.

## FAMILY

Lycopodiaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Palhinhaea cernua* (L.) Franco et Vasc.

## 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

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: Kermadec Islands, North Island (common from Te Paki south to Lake Taupo thence scarce), South Island (reaching a southern limit at about Okarito), Chatham Islands. 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.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

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



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



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## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

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 × 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)).

## 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 *Palhinhaea cernua* is remarkably tolerant of dry conditions. This species is frost sensitive.

## ETYMOLOGY

**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 PJ, Smith-Dodsworth JC. 2000. New Zealand Ferns and Allied Plants. David Bateman, Auckland, NZ. 168 p.

Chinnock RJ. 1998. Lycopodiaceae. *Flora of Australia 48, Ferns Gymnosperms and allied groups*: 66–85. ABRIS/CSIRO Victoria, Australia.

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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## MORE INFORMATION

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