

Polyphlebium venosum

COMMON NAMES

veined bristle fern, veined filmy fern

BIOSTATUS

Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Epiphytic (rarely terrestrial) fern usually forming dense carpets on suitable substrates. **Rhizomes** 0.2–0.8 mm diameter, widely creeping, much-branched and interwoven; densely hairy, hairs long, golden brown.

FronDS 20–180 mm long, bright green, translucent, venation conspicuous.

Stipe 8–55 mm long, slender, not winged. **Rachises** winged. **Lamina** 20–110 × 15–65 mm, lanceolate to elliptic, somewhat irregular, 1-pinnatifid, 1(–2)-pinnate, glabrescent (hairs when present unbranched). Ultimate segments 1.5–6.0 mm wide; margins crenate; apex obtuse, truncate, often notched; veins pinnately branched; false veins absent. **Sori** immersed in short basal acroscopic lobes; involucre narrowly cylindrical, tapering to base, 1.5–4.0 × 0.8–1.2 mm, narrowly winged; mouth broadly dilated, sometimes bilabiate; receptacle exerted up to 10 mm beyond mouth.

SIMILAR TAXA

Polyphlebium venosum is easily recognised by the bright green, translucent, prominently veined fronds.

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: Kermadec (Raoul Island), North Island, South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura, Chatham Islands. Also Australia.

HABITAT

Coastal to montane. A widespread and common filmy fern in the wetter parts of New Zealand. This species is usually found in closed forest where it the characteristic epiphyte of tree fern (*Cyathea* and *Dicksonia* spp.) trunks, though it will colonise other suitable trees. It is also found on rock faces, amongst moss on boulders, in tree caves and very rarely on damp, moss and liverwort encrusted ground.

GENUS

Polyphlebium

FAMILY

Hymenophyllaceae

AUTHORITY

Polyphlebium venosum (R.Br.) Copel.

SYNONYMS

Trichomanes venosum R.Br., *Crepidomanes venosum* (R.Br.) Bostock, *Phlebiophyllum venosum* (R.Br.) Bosch;



Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 01/05/2011, Licence: CC BY.



Developing sori. Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 12/08/2006, Licence: CC BY.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

NZPCN now follows Ebihara et al. (2006) in recognising *Polyphlebium* as distinct from *Trichomanes*. Although Brownsey & Perrie (2016) rejected this idea, the generic segregation was adopted by the Pteridophyte Phylogeny Group (2016) and is now widely followed throughout the world.

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult—should not be removed from the wild.

ETYMOLOGY

venosum: Veined; from the latin vena; conspicuous veins

NVS CODE

POLVEN

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 72

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: SO 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

Bostock PD, Spokes TM. 1998. Hymenophyllaceae. *Flora of Australia 48, Ferns Gymnosperms and allied groups*: 116–148. ABR/CSIRO Victoria, Australia.

Brownsey PJ, Perrie LR. 2016. Hymenophyllaceae. In: Breitwieser I, Heenan PB, Wilton AD. *Flora of New Zealand - Ferns and Lycophytes*. Fascicle 15. Manaaki Whenua Press, Lincoln, NZ. <https://doi.org/10.7931/B1QP4Z>.

Ebihara A, Dubuisson, J-Y, Iwatsuki K, Hennequin S, Ito M. 2006. A taxonomic revision of the Hymenophyllaceae. *Blumea 51*: 2–57. <https://doi.org/10.3767/000651906X622210>.

PPG 1: The Pteridophyte Phylogeny Group 2016. A community-derived classification for extant lycophytes and ferns. *Journal of Systematics and Evolution 54*: 563–603. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jse.12229>.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (23 April 2011) based on Bostock & Spokes (1998).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/polyphlebium-venosum/>

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