Pteris tremula

COMMON NAMES
shaking brake, tender brake, Australian bracken

BIOSTATUS
Native

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

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Ferns

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Stout terrestrial ferns. **Rhizomes** short, erect, apex covered with long narrow, pale brown scales. **Fronds** dimorphic, tufted. **Stipes** 0.15–0.6 m long, glabrous (rarely with a few narrow basal scales), red-brown or black, often basally so and then red-yellow for rest of length. **Laminae** 0.3–1.2 × 0.2–0.7 m, bright green, yellow-green or yellow, ovate, ovate-deltoid, 3–4-pinnate at base, membranous, rachis red-brown or yellow-green. **Pinnae** overlapping; most secondary pinnae stalked or sessile. **Ultimate sterile segments** 6–38 × 3 mm wide, linear, apices blunt margins toothed; ultimate fertile segments 5–35 × 1–2 mm, linear, apices blunt, margins toothed. **Veins** free, simple or 1–2-forked. **Sori** ± continuous on a marginal vein, but absent from bases and apices of ultimate segments, protected by membranous inrolled pinna margins.

SIMILAR TAXA
Distinguished from the other species of *Pteris* indigenous or naturalised in New Zealand by the lamina which has free veins, 3–4-pinnate laminae at the base and 3-pinnate at the middle. It is perhaps superficially most similar to the uncommon naturalised *Pteris dentata* Forssk.

DISTRIBUTION
Indigenous. New Zealand: Kermadec Islands (Raoul, Meyers and Macauley Islands), Manawatāwhi / Three Kings Islands, North Island, South Island, Chatham Islands. Also Australia, Tasmania, Lord Howe, Norfolk and Fiji.

HABITAT
Coastal to montane (in northern part of range) in open, dry forest, scrub, wasteland, along track and roadsides and on retaining walls and similar sites in built up areas.

GENUS
Pteris

FAMILY
Pteridaceae

AUTHORITY
Pteris tremula R. Br.

ENDEMIC TAXON
No

Abaxial surface of pinnule showing sori arranged along the margin. Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 21/04/2007, Licence: CC BY.

Pinnule showing free veins. Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 21/04/2007, Licence: CC BY.

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Very easily grown, often naturalising in gardens and becoming weedy (and may even self establish in urban areas from spores blown in from elsewhere). Very fast growing and tolerate of most conditions except waterlogged soils and heavy shade.

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

ETYMOLOGY
pteris: A fern known to the ancient Greeks; from the Greek pteris

NVS CODE
PTETRE

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = c.240

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: 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.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING
Brownsey PJ, Smith-Dodsworth JC. 2000. New Zealand Ferns and Allied Plants. David Bateman, Auckland, NZ. 168 p.
Kramer KU, McCarthy PM. 1998. Pteridaceae. *Flora of Australia 48, Ferns Gymnosperms and allied groups*: 241–248. ABRS/CSIRO Victoria, Australia.

ATTRIBUTION
Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (17 January 2012). Description adapted from Brownsey & Smith-Dodsworth (2000) and Kramer & McCarthy (1998).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION
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MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pteris-tremula/

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