

Pyrrosia eleagnifolia

COMMON NAMES

leather-leaf fern, pyrrosia

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

FLOWER COLOURS

No flowers

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Epiphytic or rupestral rhizomatous fern. **Rhizomes** long-creeping, often densely interwoven, young portions densely invested in red-brown to fawn coloured scales. **Stipes** reduced to phyllopodia borne in intervals along rhizome. **Fronds** coriaceous, fleshy to almost succulent, undivided, 30–200 × 5–20–(30) mm; adaxially yellow-green to dark green (rarely glaucescent), glabrescent, initially sparsely covered in long straight to somewhat flexuous pale-yellow to translucent caducous hairs; abaxially densely covered in fawn or white-coloured stellate hairs, aside from midrib, veins not evident on either surface; lamina variable; sterile examples broadly ovate, rhomboidal, suborbicular, to elliptic (very rarely linear); fertile linear, linear-lanceolate to suborbicular. **Sori** without indusia, ovoid, ellipsoid to rounded, in 2–3–(4) irregular rows (rarely more) either side of midrib and set away from frond margins. **Spores** yellow.

SIMILAR TAXA

None

DISTRIBUTION

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

HABITAT

Coastal to montane. Common as an epiphyte on both indigenous and exotic trees and shrubs, also on rocks, cliffs faces and in urban areas on buildings, walls, bridges and fence posts.

GENUS

Pyrrosia

FAMILY

Polypodiaceae

AUTHORITY

Pyrrosia eleagnifolia (Bory) Hovenkamp

SYNONYMS

Pyrrosia serpens sensu Allan (1961); *Pyrrosia elaeagnifolia* (Bory) Hovenkamp orth. var.



Fronds of *Pyrrosia eleagnifolia*. Photographer: Wayne Bennett, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Rangaika, Chatham Island. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 01/06/2013, Licence: CC BY.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

N.A.

FRUITING

N.A.

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Very easily grown. Does best in dry, sunny situations. An excellent plant for rockeries, stone walls and in pots. This species often self establishes into gardens within urban areas as it is commonly found growing on the trunks of introduced trees and shrubs in urban parks, street avenues and urban indigenous forest remnants.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

UPL: Obligate Upland

Rarely is a hydrophyte, almost always in uplands (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY

pyrrosia: Flame coloured; from the Greek purros; the colour of the hairs on its leaves

eleagnifolia: Having foliage resembling Elaeagnus (from the Greek elaia, olive; and agnos, pure); Leaves like an olive tree; also spelled elaeagnifolius

NVS CODE

PYRELE

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 74

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.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 9 April 2011. Description by P.J. de Lange.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Pyrrrosia eleagnifolia* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pyrrrosia-eleagnifolia/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/pyrrosia-eleagnifolia/>

PDF DATE

08 June 2026