

Sphaeropteris cooperi

COMMON NAMES

tree fern

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

FLOWER COLOURS

No flowers

GENUS

Sphaeropteris

FAMILY

Cyatheaceae

AUTHORITY

Sphaeropteris cooperi (Hook. ex F.Muell.) R.M.Tryon

SYNONYMS

Cyathea cooperi (F.Muell.) Domin

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Currently it is unclear if the tree fern attributed to *Sphaeropteris cooperi* in New Zealand is that species or the Norfolk Island *Sphaeropteris excelsa* (*Cyathea brownii*), or if both species are present here (both have been cultivated in New Zealand in the past, and so naturalisation from either of them is now possible). For the time being the name used here for naturalised occurrences accords with that accepted by the N.Z. eFlora (Brownsey & Perrie 2015).

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

YEAR NATURALISED

1993

ORIGIN

Australia

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Hard to distinguish from natives, there is a possibility that it might hybridise.

NATIONAL PEST PLANT ACCORD SPECIES

This plant is listed in the 2020 National Pest Plant Accord. The National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA) is an agreement to prevent the sale and/or distribution of specified pest plants where either formal or casual horticultural trade is the most significant way of spreading the plant in New Zealand. For up to date information and an electronic copy of the 2020 Pest Plant Accord manual (including plant information and images) visit the [MPI website](#).



Cyathea cooperi. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.



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ENVIRONMENTAL WEED (2024)

This plant is named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand 2024 prepared by DOC. 759 candidate species were considered for inclusion on this new comprehensive list of environmental weeds in New Zealand. The species considered were drawn from published lists of weed species, lists of plants that must be reported or managed by law if observed, existing national and regional programmes and agreements for pest management, and species already managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Candidate species were then assessed to see if they were fully naturalised and whether they have more than minor impacts in natural ecosystems. Read the full report [here](#).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Brownsey PJ, Perrie LR. 2015. Cyatheaceae. In: Breitwieser I, Heenan PB, Wilton AD. Flora of New Zealand - Ferns and Lycophytes. Fascicle 13. Manaaki Whenua Press, Lincoln, NZ.

<https://doi.org/10.7931/B10595>.

Gardner R. 1994. *Cyathea cooperi* naturalised in Auckland. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 49: 43–44.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/sphaeropteris-cooperi/>

PDF DATE

27 May 2026