

Hymenophyllum dilatatum

COMMON NAMES

filmy fern, matua mauku

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Epiphytic (very rarely terrestrial) fern. **Rhizomes** long-creeping, gracile, wiry when fresh very brittle when dry. **Stipes** often widely spaced on rhizomes, 20–150–(200) mm long, stout, glabrous, distinctly though narrowly winged for part of length; rachises broadly winged throughout. **Laminae** 80–400–(800) × 40–150–(160) mm, ovate, narrowly ovate to lanceolate, 3–4-pinnate, bright to dark green, glabrous. **Ultimate segments** rather broad, margins smooth, plane. **Sori** terminating ultimately segments, slightly sunk in lamina, many on each primary pinna. **Indusial flaps** smooth. (Description adapted from Brownsey & Smith-Dodsworth (2000)).

SIMILAR TAXA

Easily distinguished from all other *Hymenophyllum* by the glabrous, smooth margined fronds; by the conspicuous broad, flat wing bordering much of the stipe and all of the rachis; and by the very broad pinnae.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic, New Zealand: North Island, South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura, Chatham Islands, Auckland Islands. Widespread except for the drier parts of the eastern South Island.

HABITAT

Coastal to montane in forest. Usually epiphytic or on fallen logs and banks, Very rarely on the forest floor or on boulders.

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

DETAILED TAXONOMY

GENUS

Hymenophyllum

FAMILY

Hymenophyllaceae

AUTHORITY

Hymenophyllum dilatatum (G. Forst.) Sw.

SYNONYMS

Mecodium dilatatum (G. Forst.) Copel.; Sphaerocionium dilatatum (G.Forst.) C.Presl; Trichomanes dilatatum G.Forst.; Diploophyllum dilatatum (G.Forst.) Bosch; Leptocionium sororium C.Presl



Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 01/08/2006, Licence: CC BY.



Sori. Stokes Valley. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 01/08/2006, Licence: CC BY.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

ECOLOGY

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Minute spores are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult—should not be removed from the wild

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

UPL: Obligate Upland

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

OTHER INFORMATION

ETYMOLOGY

hymenophyllum: Membranous leaf, from the Greek humen and phullon

NVS CODE

HYMDIL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 72

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2024 | 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 [“Regional conservation status of indigenous vascular plants in Otago” Jarvie S et al. \(2024\) report](#).

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](#).

REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001>.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (17 April 2011). Description adapted from Brownsey & Smith-Dodsworth (2000).

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/hymenophyllum-dilatatum/>

PDF DATE

25 September 2025