

Hymenophyllum flabellatum

COMMON NAMES

filmy fern

SYNONYMS

Mecodium flabellatum (Labill.) Copel.; *Hymenophyllum nitens* R.Br.

FAMILY

Hymenophyllaceae

AUTHORITY

Hymenophyllum flabellatum Labill.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

NVS CODE

HYMFLA

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 72$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: Kermadec Islands, North Island, South Island (except eastern part), Stewart Island/Rakiura, Chatham Islands, Antipodes Islands, Auckland Islands. Also Australia (Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania); Vanuatu, Fiji, Samoa and Tahiti.

HABITAT

Coastal to montane forest. Often epiphytic, especially on tree fern trunks, but also on shaded or sheltered, damp rocks, cliff faces, and overhanging banks



Franz Josef. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 16/01/1983, Licence: CC BY.



Sori. Dome Walkway. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 15/07/2006, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Rhizome long creeping, wiry, branched, 0.3–0.8 mm diameter, tan-coloured, with opaque villous hairs but tomentose at the stipe junction. **Fronds** 20–80 mm long, peundulous, rarely suberect. **Stipe** wiry, flexuose, 8–20 mm long, unwinged, with scattered pale-white or yellow hairs extending along main rachis. **Lamina** yellow-green, very variable in size and shape, oblong-linear to ovate-lanceolate (dwarfed fronds often broadly deltoid to round), 20–270 × 10–65 mm; primary division pinnate in the lower part, deeply pinnatifid above; pinnae or primary laminal segments oblique, 1–2-pinnatifid, flabellate, ovate or rhombic. **Ultimate segments** linear, 0.5–2.2 mm wide, glabrous to glabrescent; margins entire, 1–2-cells thick, apex obtuse, occasionally emarginate. **Sori** numerous; involucre ovate to rotund, bilabiate to below the middle, 0.5–2.0 × 0.5–2.0 mm; base broadly and shallowly cuneate; margins entire; receptacle included or slightly exserted. (Description adapted from Bostock & Spokes (1998) and Brownsey & Smith-Dodsworth (2000)).

SIMILAR TAXA

Only likely to be confused with the montane to subalpine, much less common endemic *Hymenophyllum rufescens*, which is a much smaller plant (up to 50 mm long), with deltoid fronds whose pinnae are covered in reddish, long, flexuose hairs. Although *Hymenophyllum flabellatum* and *H. rufescens* are rarely found growing together, occasional intermediates have been found, some of which are suggestive that both species may at times hybridise.

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult—should not be removed from the wild.

ETYMOLOGY

hymenophyllum: Membranous leaf, from the Greek humen and phullon

flabellatum: Fan shaped; from the Latin flabellum; shape of the leaves

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

PLANT OF THE MONTH

This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see [Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for September 2023](#) for the full story.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet Prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (July 2009). Description adapted from Bostock & Spokes (1998) and Brownsey & Smith-Dodsworth (2000).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

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>.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

17 September 2024