

# Asplenium hookerianum var. hookerianum

## COMMON NAMES

Hooker's spleenwort

## BIOSTATUS

Native

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

**Rhizome** short, erect, bearing numerous brown, ovate, acuminate scales up to 10 × 2 mm. **Stipes** 20–100 mm long, pale brown below, green above, densely covered in small, subulate to narrowly ovate scales with filiform apices. **Laminae** lanceolate to rhombic, 40–250 × 10–150 mm, dark green, thin, normally bipinnate but often pinnate when young and almost tripinnate in well-grown specimens. **Raches** green, slender, and very scaly. **Pinnae** 5–15 pairs, very narrowly ovate to ovate, obtuse to acuminate, long-stalked, 10–80 × 5–20 mm, basal pair pointing upwards when fresh. **Pinnules** stalked, 3–10 pairs, linear to suborbicular, crenate to deeply incised (or almost pinnate), 3–12 × 3–10 mm, tending to lie at 90° to plane of frond in well-grown specimens. **Sori** sub-marginal on narrow pinnules, remote from margins on broad segments, 1–3 mm long.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Most likely to be confused with *Asplenium bulbiferum* G.Forst. from which it differs by the absence of bulbils. *Asplenium richardii* (Hook.f.) Hook.f. is somewhat similar but usually much larger, with a stouter stipe, and the ultimate segments are linear, mostly < 1 mm wide; and the pinnae and pinnules are crowded and overlapping. *Asplenium richardii* is scarce and exclusively alpine in the North Island, and more common at higher elevations of the drier, eastern South Island than *A. hookerianum*. *Asplenium hookerianum* is distinguished from other asplenia by the non-creeping, tufted, growth habit, dull rather than glossy, thin fronds which bear mostly < 15 pairs of 2–3–4-pinnae, with the pinnules distinctly held on slender stalks, and which are not broadened in region of sorus. The sori are mostly submarginal, or if remote from margin, then they are < 4 mm long. *Asplenium hookerianum* var. *colensoi* Colenso differs by its much narrower pinnules.

## DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: North Island (scarce north of Waikato), South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura, Chatham Islands. Present (but extremely uncommon) in Tasmania and south-eastern Australia.

## HABITAT

Coastal to alpine. Usually on shaded clay banks or rocky outcrops in scrub and open forest, or on the ground in disturbed forest remnants.

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened



Silverstream Scenic Reserve, Upper Hutt.  
Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken:  
07/10/2006, Licence: CC BY.



(left) var. colensoi; (right) var. hookerianum.  
Stronvar, eastern Wairarapa. Photographer:  
Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 10/10/2010,  
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## DETAILED TAXONOMY

### FAMILY

Aspleniaceae

### AUTHORITY

*Asplenium hookerianum* Colenso var. *hookerianum*

### SYNONYMS

*Asplenium adiantoides* Raoul; *Asplenium adiantoides* var. *minus* Hook f.; *Asplenium adiantoides* var. *hookeriana* Hook. f.; *Asplenium ornatum* Colenso; *Asplenium symmetricum* Colenso; *Asplenium hookerianum* Colenso

### ENDEMIC TAXON

No

### ENDEMIC GENUS

No

### ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

### ECOLOGY

### LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

### PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown, and an excellent pot plant. However, rather slow growing, and as with all asplenia prone to infestations of scale and mealy bugs.

### OTHER INFORMATION

### ETYMOLOGY

**asplenium:** From the Greek a- 'without' and splene 'spleen', a northern hemisphere species, the black spleenwort (*Asplenium adiantum-nigrum*), was once believed to be a cure for diseases of the spleen.

**hookerianum:** Named after Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker (born 1817) - a world famous botanist who travelled on the Antarctic expedition of 1839 under the command of Sir James Ross and wrote "Handbook of New Zealand Flora" published in 1864-67 describing many specimens sent to Kew by collectors. He died in 1911 and has a memorial stone at Westminster Abbey London.

### NVS CODE

ASPHOO

### CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 144

### PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

### REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

#### REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Brownsey PJ. 1977. A taxonomic revision of the New Zealand species of *Asplenium*. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 15(1): 39-86. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.1977.10429618>.

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

Description adapted from Brownsey (1977)

**MORE INFORMATION**

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/asplenium-hookerianum-var-hookerianum/>

**PDF DATE**

13 October 2024