

Hymenophyllum rufescens

COMMON NAME

filmy fern

SYNONYMS

Mecodium rufescens (Kirk) Copel.

FAMILY

Hymenophyllaceae

AUTHORITY

Hymenophyllum rufescens Kirk

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

NVS CODE

HYMRUF

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 44

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DP

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand. North Island (from Te Moehau and Mt Pirongia south but often rather uncommon), South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura.

HABITAT

Lowland to subalpine. Strictly montane to subalpine in the North Island but descending to almost sea level in the western South Island. Usually a low epiphyte on tree trunks where it is commonly found in tree root caves or on overhanging tree roots. Also in holes on rotting logs, or on damp rock faces, overhangs or amongst boulders. Occasionally sympatric with *H. flabellatum* with which it appears to hybridise.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Terrestrial or low epiphytic fern forming diffuse creeping patches. **Rhizomes** long-creeping, thin, rather brittle. **FronDS** somewhat reddish yellow-green to red-green or dark red-green. **Stipes** 10–800 mm long, thin, brittle, not winged, bearing long, pale red-brown to brown unbranched hairs; rachises very narrowly winged in upper portion. **Laminae** 10–50 × 1–50 mm, deltoid, 1–(2)-pinnate, adaxially and abaxially bearing long pale red-brown, brown or reddish white curly hairs (these increasing in density toward laminae base and rachis). **Pinnae** deltoid-flabellate, flabellate, margins smooth. **Sori** terminating ultimate segments, slightly sunk in lamina, several on each primary pinna. **Indusial flaps** entire or minutely toothed.



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SIMILAR TAXA

Allied to *Hymenophyllum flabellatum* from which it differs by its smaller size, and strongly deltoid fronds whose surfaces are covered in curly usually reddish hairs. The stipes of *H. rufescens* are generally as long as or longer than the frond laminae. Intermediates between *H. rufescens* and *H. flabellatum* occur and these could be hybrids.

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult—should not be removed from the wild

THREATS

Not Threatened but not that common and biologically sparse so possibly worthy of listing as “At Risk/Naturally Uncommon”

ETYMOLOGY

hymenophyllum: Membranous leaf, from the Greek humen and phullon

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (20 April 2011). Description adapted from Brownsey & Smith-Dodsworth (2000).

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>.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

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