

Sticherus cunninghamii

COMMON NAME

umbrella fern, waekura, tapuwae kotuku

SYNONYMS

Gleichenia cunninghamii Hook.

FAMILY

Gleicheniaceae

AUTHORITY

Sticherus cunninghamii (Hook.) Ching

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

NVS CODE

STICUN

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 68

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand; North Island, South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura, Auckland Islands. Widespread and common, though often absent from large parts of the eastern side of the two main islands

HABITAT

Coastal to montane (but mostly coastal only in the wetter western part of the South Island, and in Stewart Island/Rakiura and Auckland Islands). Usually in forest where it may at times form the dominant ground cover. Also common along shaded stream banks, and in wetter areas a prominent fern along roadside cuttings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Rhizomatous fern. **Rhizomes** long creeping, copiously covered in scales. **Fronds** erect, up to 1.4 m tall. **Stipes** 0.2–0.5–(0.8) m long, pale brown, scaly and hairy, scales ciliate, hairs stellate. **Rachises** in 1–3 tiers, each forking 3–4x, 120–300 mm from the stipe to tip of the longest branch, spreading and drooping in the form of an umbrella, abundantly scaly; apex of each fork terminated by a bud. **Pinnae** up to 15 × 3 mm, linear, acute, veins free, adaxially green, abaxially glaucous white or white. **Sori** in one row either side of midrib, set well away from pinna margins, consisting of c. 5 aggregated sporangia, indusia absent. (Description adapted from Brownsey & Smith-Dodsworth (2000)).



Sticherus cunninghamii. Photographer: Department of Conservation, Licence: Public domain.



Lake Matheson. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 12/12/1981, Licence: CC BY.

SIMILAR TAXA

Easily distinguished from *Sticherus flabellatus* var. *flabellatus* and *S. tener* by the shorter, scaly frond, narrower and much longer frond divisions, and by the pinnules which are shorter and wider and which usually have white to whitish-glaucous undersides.

FLOWERING

Not applicable—spore producing

FLOWER COLOURS

No flowers

FRUITING

Not applicable—spore producing

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult—should not be removed from the wild.

ETYMOLOGY

sticherus: In rows; from the greek sticheres; arrangement of the spore clusters

cunninghamii: Named after Allan Cunningham (1791–1839) who was an English botanist and explorer, primarily known for his travels to Australia (New South Wales) and New Zealand to collect plants. Author of *Florae Insularum Novae Zelandiae Praecursor*, 1837–40 (Introduction to the flora of New Zealand).

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 16 March 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.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/sticherus-cunninghamii/>