

# Alsophila colensoi

## COMMON NAME

rough tree fern, mountain tree fern

## SYNONYMS

*Cyathea colensoi* (Hook.f.) Domin

## FAMILY

Cyatheaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Alsophila colensoi* Hook.f.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

## NVS CODE

CYACOL

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 138

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Small tree fern with green-stalked roughish leaves to 1.5 m long. Trunk to 1 m tall or not present. Leaf stems covered in small red and white star-shaped hairs, star-tipped scales and pointed scales (lens needed). Sporangia arranged in small round hairy clusters underneath fronds.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island ( from Mt Pirongia and the Kaimai Range south), South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura.

## HABITAT

Montane to subalpine in dense forest, along stream courses, often near the bush line, sometimes extending into subalpine scrub.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

**Trunks** prostrate, or erect (up to 1 m tall). **Stipes** slender, pale brown, finely rugose, bearing numerous scales.

**Scales** pale brown to red-brown, lacking margin spines. **Fronds** up to 1.5 m long, held upright, 3-pinnate, soft; dead fronds falling (not persistent). **Longest primary pinnae** 150–400 mm long, adaxially hairy, abaxially covered in red stellate hairs and scales ending in single or stellate spines. **Indusia** absent; long hairs present amongst sporangia. (Description adapted from Brownsey & Smith-Dodsworth (2000)).



*Cyathea colensoi*. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



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### SIMILAR TAXA

Most often confused with young *Alsophila smithii* with which it sometimes grows but distinguished by its prostrate to shortly erect trunk, finely and copiously hairy upper frond surface, absence of an indusia, and by the long hairs protruding from the sorus.

### FLOWERING

Not applicable—spore producing

### FLOWER COLOURS

No flowers

### FRUITING

Not applicable—spore producing

### PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult to grow and probably best left well alone. Some success has been had planting specimens into a rich, permanently damp soil within a shaded situation. Dislikes humidity and heat.

### ETYMOLOGY

**colensoi**: Named after William Colenso (7 November 1811 - 10 February 1899) who was a Cornish Christian missionary to New Zealand, and also a printer, botanist, explorer and politician.

### WHERE TO BUY

Occasionally available from specialist native plant nurseries.

### ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 22 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

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Alsophila colensoi* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/alsophila-colensoi/> (Date website was queried)

### MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/alsophila-colensoi/>