

Asplenium hookerianum var. colensoi

COMMON NAME

Colenso's spleenwort

SYNONYMS

Asplenium colensoi Hook.f.; *Asplenium adiantoides* var. *colensoi* Hook. f.;
Asplenium richardii var. *colensoi* Hook.

FAMILY

Aspleniaceae

AUTHORITY

Asplenium hookerianum var. *colensoi* (Hook.f.) Moore

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

NVS CODE

ASPHVC

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 144

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, Chatham Islands.

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.

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, bipinnate to tripinnate in well-grown specimens. **Raches** green, slender, and very scaly. **Pinnae** 5–15 pairs, very narrowly ovate, acuminate, long-stalked, 10–80 × 5–20 mm, basal pair pointing upwards when fresh. **Pinnules** stalked, 3–10 pairs, linear, 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.



William Hartree Reserve, Hawke's Bay.

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SIMILAR TAXA

Closely allied to *A. hookerianum* Colenso var. *hookerianum* from which it differs only by its much narrower, linear pinnules. This variety is always found in association with *A. hookerianum* var. *hookerianum*.

LIFE CYCLE

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.

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.

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.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Asplenium hookerianum var. *colensoi* is not upheld by Brownsey (1977) who argues that it is merely a state of *A. hookerianum* var. *hookerianum*. For the time being the variety is maintained because despite that view many people regard it as distinct. *Asplenium hookerianum* var. *colensoi* may perhaps be better treated at the rank of forma.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (6 June 2007). Description based on Brownsey (1977) supplemented with observations of fresh specimens and herbarium material.

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>.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

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