

# Asplenium obtusatum

## COMMON NAME

shore spleenwort

## SYNONYMS

*Asplenium obtusatum* var. *obliquum* (G.Forst.) Hook.f.; *Asplenium apicidentatum* Homb. et Jacq.; *Asplenium lucidum* var. *obliquum* (G.Forst.) Moore; *Asplenium obtusatum* G.Forst. subsp. *obtusatum*

## FAMILY

Aspleniaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Asplenium obtusatum* G.Forst.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

No

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

## NVS CODE

ASPOBT

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 144

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: North Island (Cook Strait only), South Island, Chatham Islands, Stewart Island/Rakiura, Snares Islands/Tini Heke, Antipodes Islands, Auckland Islands and Campbell Island/Motu Ihupuku. Also South America as well as on many islands of the southern Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

## HABITAT

A coastal fern confined in the northern part of its range to only the most exposed situations. Further south it grows not only on exposed cliffs but also in coastal vegetation where it often forms an important association with *Veronica elliptica* and *Austroblechnum durum*. Frequently associated with sea bird colonies.



In cultivation ex Matiu/Somes Island.  
Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken:  
16/09/2002, Licence: CC BY.



South-East Island, Chatham Islands.  
Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken:  
20/02/1985, Licence: CC BY.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Rhizome stout, often forming a hard woody mass above ground, bearing brown, shiny, ovate, acuminate scales up to 15 × 4 mm. **Stipes** 40–300 mm long, dark brown at base, green above, stout, covered in ovate scales with acute or acuminate apices. **Laminae** ovate, 60–400 × 50–200 mm, dull green, very thick and fleshy, pinnate. **Raches** green, stout, prominently grooved and scaly. **Pinnae** 5–15 pairs, narrowly ovate to oblong, obtuse to acute, crenate-serrate to entire, cuneate at base, 10–100 × 10–25 mm, scaly on the underside. **Sori** up to 10 mm long, not reaching to lamina edge.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Recognised by the penchant for exposed sea cliffs; by the simply pinnate, thick and fleshy fronds which are < 30 mm wide; by the stipe and rachis which is scaly; by the usually < 8 pairs of pinnae; and by the pinnae bearing scales on the underside only. *Asplenium decurrens* differs from *A. obtusatum* by its allopatric distribution, narrowly triangular scales, mostly smaller fronds, larger spores and octoploid chromosome number (2n = 288 cf. 2n = 144 in *A. obtusatum*).

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown but generally rather slow. A spectacular pot plant. Thrives with added poultry manure, thus simulating its common habitat of coastal seabird colonies (Ogle 1987).

## 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.

**obtusatum**: Obtuse, or blunt

## WHERE TO BUY

Occasionally available from plant and specialist native plant nurseries although some plants sold are *A. decurrens*.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 29 August 2007. Description adapted from Brownsey (1977).

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Brownsey P.J. 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>.

Ogle C.C. 1987: Taxonomic changes in *Asplenium* (Aspleniaceae; Filicales) in New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 25(4): 591–593. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.1987.10410089>.

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

## MORE INFORMATION

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