

# Hymenophyllum rarum

## COMMON NAME

filmy fern

## SYNONYMS

Mecodium rarum (R. Br.) Copel.; Hymenophyllum imbricatum Colenso;  
Hymenophyllum semibivalve Hook. et Grev.

## FAMILY

Hymenophyllaceae

## AUTHORITY

Hymenophyllum rarum R. Br.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

No

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

## NVS CODE

HYMRAR

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 72$

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Not Threatened

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

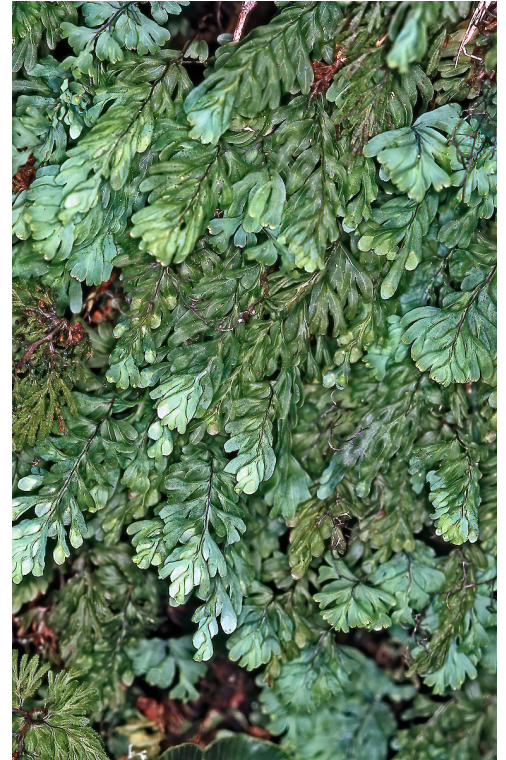
2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: North Island, South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura, Chatham Islands, Auckland Islands. Also Australia.

## HABITAT

Coastal to montane. Common throughout the country in close forest, scrub, on shaded cliff faces, amongst boulders and in rubble slopes. Rather drought tolerant and often found growing in very exposed sites.



Kaitoke, Upper Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 04/04/2004, Licence: CC BY.



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## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Terrestrial or epiphytic, aromatic fern forming extensive, interwoven, creeping patches. **Rhizomes** long-creeping, very thin, brittle. **Fronde**s pale grey-green (glaucous). **Stipes** 20–70 mm long, very thin, wiry when fresh, very brittle when dry, glabrous, not winged; rachises very narrowly winged in upper part. **Laminae** 20–120 × 10–30 mm, narrowly ovate, narrowly elliptic, rarely deltoid, usually 2-pinnate, membranous, glabrous. **Ultimate segments** oblong, imbricate, margins smooth. **Sori** terminating the uppermost ultimate segments, ovoid completely immersed in lamina, few on each primary pinna, mostly confined to upper part of frond. **Indusium flaps** entire. (Description adapted from Brownsey & Smith-Dodsworth (2000)).

## SIMILAR TAXA

Easily recognised by the peculiar grey-green, small, membranous fronds; by the smooth margins of the pinnae, ultimate segments and indusia; and by the sori which are sunk within the uppermost segments of the uppermost pinnae. Australian plants of *H. rarum* (which include the type of this species) are rather different differing by the non-aromatic, widely spaced rather than imbricating pale green, pinnae. The sori of Australian *H. rarum* are almost not wholly immersed within the pinnae nor confined to the uppermost segments of the uppermost pinnae. It seems likely that New Zealand plants referred to *H. rarum* may warrant recognition as a separate species. Further study into this matter is needed.

## LIFE CYCLE

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

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult—should not be removed from the wild.

## ETYMOLOGY

**hymenophyllum**: Membranous leaf, from the Greek humen and phullon

**rarum**: Thin leaved; from the Latin rarus

## 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

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Hymenophyllum rarum* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network.

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

## MORE INFORMATION

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