

Leifidium tenerum

SYNONYMS

Sphaerophorus tener, *Sphaerophorus taylorii*, *Sphaerophoron australe*, *Sphaerophorus curtus*, *Sphaerophorus tener* var. *curtus*, *Sphaerophorus globosus* var. *curtus*, *Sphaerophorus tener* f. *curtus*, *Sphaerophorus tener* f. *globosoides*

FAMILY

Sphaerophoraceae

AUTHORITY

Leifidium tenerum (Laurer) Wedin

FLORA CATEGORY

Lichen – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Lichens - Fruticose

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2018 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Characterised by the terricolous/corticolous habit; the pale, slender, richly branched thallus which often forms extensive colonies covering large areas, or small cushions or patches on twigs and branches; and by the terminal apothecia on taller stouter branches projecting above the thallus.

DISTRIBUTION

North Island. South Island. Stewart Island. Chatham Islands. Auckland Islands. Campbell Island. Antarctica. Macquarie Island. Throughout from Northland (Pandora) to Stewart Island, and the subantarctic islands, both E and W of the Main Divide, very widely distributed both on the ground and on rocks in alpine and subantarctic biomes, and in all types of temperate rainforest and occasionally in bogs. Known also from SE Australia, Tasmania, Argentina and Chile.

HABITAT

Found in a wide variety of habitats from moist, humid habitats of moderate shade, where it is an epiphyte of tree trunks and branches, to exposed subalpine or alpine grasslands.



Hinewai Reserve, Banks Peninsula.
Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken:
19/10/2019, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Hinewai Reserve, Banks Peninsula.
Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken:
19/10/2019, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Thallus corticolous or terricolous rarely, on mossy rocks, occurring as small to large cushions, occasionally forming extensive patches on soil, to 1 m wide, morphology very variable, of elongate, fertile erect extended primary branches with shorter, thinner, sterile ± richly branched almost corymbose secondary branches. Primary branches terete, elongate, sparsely to frequently branched, to 7 cm tall, 0.6-1.2 mm wide, surface shining, pale white or greenish-white to fawn or yellowish-brown, cortex papery, thin, 30-45 µm covered by a thin (2-3 µm) epicortex. Algal layer 15-25 µm thick, continuous beneath cortex. **Medulla** of thick-walled hyphae 6-9 µm diam., partially fused and forming a dense central strand. **Apothecia** terminal 0.5-1.5 mm diam., subglobose to globose, mazaedium apical, exposed by irregular apical rupture of enclosing receptacle, at maturity partially surrounded by receptacle or free and prominent. Asci 40-65 × 5-8 µm. **Ascospores** spherical hyaline to greyish, 6.5-10 µm.

Chemistry: Medulla K-, C-, KC-, Pd-, I-; containing sphaerophorin (major) and unidentified compounds.

SUBSTRATE

Corticolous, terricolous

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by Melissa Hutchison (30 November 2021). Brief description, Distribution, Habitat, and Features sections copied from Galloway (1985, 2007).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Galloway D.J. 1985: *Flora of New Zealand: Lichens*. Wellington: PD Hasselberg, Government Printer. 662 pp.
Galloway D.J. 2007: *Flora of New Zealand: Lichens, including lichen-forming and lichenicolous fungi*. 2nd edition. Lincoln, Manaaki Whenua Press. 2261 pp.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/leifidium-tenerum/>