

# Leptogidium contortum

## SYNONYMS

Polychidium contortum

## FAMILY

Pannariaceae

## AUTHORITY

Leptogidium contortum (Henssen) T.Sprib. & Muggia

## 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

Dark green, fruticose lichen with fine, felt-like branches. Sometimes forms impressive, large ball-like thalli on twigs.

## DISTRIBUTION

**North Island:** Northland (Te Pahi Trig Bush, Mt Tutamoe [where it occurs rarely on twigs of *Pinus radiata* in a plantation], Kaiwaka Little Barrier Island), Auckland (Piha Gorge, Waitakere Ranges), South Auckland (King Country), Wellington (Taranaki Falls Tongariro National Park), Wellington (Snake Valley near Turangi). **South Island:** Nelson (Denniston, Stillwater), Marlborough (Ship Cove, Resolution Bay), Westland (Kellys Creek, Ross), Canterbury (Peel Forest), Otago (Barrier River), Southland (Dusky Sound).

**Stewart Island. Auckland Islands:** Both E and W of the Main Divide.

Known also from Tasmania and recently reported from British Columbia, and Oregon.

## HABITAT

On twigs and bark (especially *Dracophyllum*, *Kunzea* and *Leptospermum*) in shaded, humid habitats, lowland to subalpine.

*Leptogidium contortum*, although not collected frequently, seems characteristic of successional vegetation at the margins of forest in areas of high rainfall, and frequent fog. It sometimes forms impressive, large ball-like thalli on the twigs of isolated *Myrsine divaricata* in riverflat grassland, where it associates with other cyanobacterial lichens such as *Coccocarpia erythroxyli*, *C. palmicola*, *Coenogonium implexum*, *Degelia gayana*, *Erioderma solediatum*, *E. leylandii*, *Fuscoderma amphibola*, *Pannaria euphylla*, *P. fulvescens*, *Physma chilense* and *Pseudocyphellaria hookeri*.



Corticolous in broadleaf forest, Hokianga Northland. Photographer: Marley Ford, Date taken: 26/12/2019, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Corticolous in broadleaf forest, Hokianga Northland. Photographer: Marley Ford, Date taken: 26/12/2019, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

**Thallus** fruticose, in felt-like clumps on bark or twigs to 3 cm diam., flaccid and ± spongy when wet, brittle when dry. Branches terete, rather fragile, very fine at apices, stouter (to 0.2 mm wide) below, branching ± dichotomous, but densely tangled and complex in older parts. Surface of branches smooth or slightly wrinkled, blue-green or blackish at apices, bluish-brown or tan below. **Photobiont** *Scytonema*. **Apothecia** frequent, lateral, to 1.5 mm diam., disc reddish-brown, subconvex, immarginate. **Ascospores** polymorphic, 9-13 × 1.5-7 µm.

**Chemistry:** Nil.

## SUBSTRATE

Corticolous

There is some doubt, however, as to the North American taxon being conspecific with *L. contortum* from New Zealand.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by Marley Ford (24 January 2022). Distribution, Habitat, Features and Similar taxa sections copied from Galloway (1985) & Galloway (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/leptogidium-contortum/>