

Siphula decumbens

SYNONYMS

Siphula medioxima Nyl., *Nylanderella medioxima* (Nyl.) Hu

FAMILY

Imadophilaceae

AUTHORITY

Siphula decumbens Nyl.

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, rarely muscicolous habit; the whitish thallus; the generally broad, scabrid (×10 lens) lobes that are frequently dorsiventral (with one side more markedly scabrid than the other) and irregularly branched and lobed in several planes; the lobulate, crenulate or lacerate apices; and the presence of thamnolic acid (K+ bright-yellow turning brownish red).

DISTRIBUTION

North Island: Northland (Herekino Gorge, Great Barrier Island). South Auckland (Hunua Range, Mt Moehau, Table Mountain, Kaitarakihi, Coromandel Range, Te Aroha, Kaimai Range), Gisborne (Lake Ruapani), Wellington (Riapahu, Tararua Range, Rimutaka Range). **South Island:** Nelson (Pakawau, Mt Arthur, Lead Hills, Cobb Ridge, St Arnaud Range, Travers Valley), Marlborough (Mt Stokes), Westland (Denniston and Stockton Plateaux), Canterbury (Lewis Pass, Arthur's Pass, Mt Cook), Otago (Mt Brewster Haast Pass, Blue River, Forgotten River, Humboldt Mts, The Remarkables, Old Man Range, Silver Peaks, Maungatua), Southland (Key Summit, Resolution Island, above Cascade Cove Dusky Sound, near Lake Poteriteri, Borland Saddle, Longwood Range). **Stewart Island:** (Mt Anglem, Glory Cove Paterson Inlet, Table Hill, Mt Allen, Tin Range., Disappointment Cove, Cook's Arm, Fraser Peaks, Fright Cove Port Pegasus, Smith's Lookout). **Auckland Islands:** (Musgrave Inlet).

Widely distributed in the palaeotropics being known from South and East Africa, Réunion, Madagascar, Central America, Venezuela, the Caribbean, Brazil, Borneo, Japan, China, Taiwan, Papua New Guinea, and Tasmania.



Locally abundant on tracksides, Great Barrier Island. Photographer: Marley Ford, Date taken: 12/04/2023, Licence: CC BY.



Locally abundant on tracksides, Great Barrier Island. Photographer: Marley Ford, Date taken: 12/04/2023, Licence: CC BY.

HABITAT

On soil, and among mosses in subalpine to high-alpine grassland, in scrub and bog associations above treeline, among mosses on tree stumps and at the base of forest trees, s.l. to 1600 m.

Siphula decumbens is the most widespread species of *Siphula* in New Zealand and also the most variable. It occupies a variety of habitats from subalpine soils at sea level around Foveaux Strait and on Stewart Island, to alpine soils in most mountainous areas of South Island, to epiphytic moss communities on tree trunks and stumps in sites in north Westland, Nelson, the Coromandel Range, Great Barrier Island, and North Auckland. When growing among bryophytes in shaded, ± humid habitats, thalli of *S. decumbens* are thinner, flatter, more delicate, marginally lacerate-fenestrate with a granular-areolate surface with a pronounced greenish or blue-green colour. Forms from exposed alpine soils are shorter, thicker, more coriaceous and crowded-congested, and may yet prove to be specifically distinct. In some alpine areas along tracks well used by trampers and climbers, thalli of *S. decumbens* are fragmented and dispersed in the soil at the side of the tracks. In such situations it is possible to observe a change in the morphology of *S. decumbens* from the alpine grassland type, to the lacerate-fenestrate type characteristic of forest conditions, as fragments are carried down through subalpine scrub into the upper reaches of the forest and establish there in damper and more shaded conditions. It is possible, too, that in certain areas, trampling by deer also influences the distribution of this species.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Thallus lobes variable, narrow, 2-6 mm wide, 0.3-3(-4) cm tall, ± terete or flattened, rarely simple, strap-like, margins entire or variously notched and incised, apices rounded, furcate or irregularly pectinate, ± unilaterally thickened, crowded, congested. Surface ± smooth, coriaceous to roughened, scabrid-areolate or furrowed, in humid, low-light sites often ± fenestrate with ragged, lacerate margins, chalky white in subalpine exposed sites, becoming greenish in sheltered, humid or shaded sites, 0.3 mm thick, smoother and more coriaceous in exposed subalpine habitats, 0.05-0.1 mm thick in shade forms.

Chemistry: Cortex and medulla K+ yellow to brownish red, C-, KC-, Pd+ yellow-orange, UV-; containing thamnolic acid and traces of an unidentified compound.

SUBSTRATE

Terricolous, rarely muscicolous

ETYMOLOGY

decumbens: From the Latin decumbere 'to lie down, recline', in botany refers to creeping plants with upright tips

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by Marley Ford (22 April 2023). Information in the Brief description, Distribution, Habitat, Features and Similar taxa 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/siphula-decumbens/>