



Polystichum neozelandicum subsp. *zerophyllum*

Common Name(s):

shield fern

Current Threat Status (2012):

Not Threatened

Distribution:

Endemic. New Zealand: North, South, Stewart and Chatham Islands, In the North Island ranging from Taupo and the South Bay of Plenty southwards (but extent of overlap with *P. neozelandicum* subsp. *neozelandicum* not clear).

Habitat:

Coastal to montane. Common fern of forested hillsides and banks, coastal cliff faces (under scrub), usually in well-lit conditions. It has also extended its range into urban situations where it sometimes a feature of roadside banks and cuttings.

Features*:

Rhizomes short, erect. Stipes 100–420 mm long. Stipes and rachises moderately to densely scaly. Scales obviously scale-like to the naked-eye; usually acicular-lanceolate; usually widest in the basal third of length; those from the stipe-rachis junction usually 135–570 µm wide at mid length; mid to dark brown, often appearing black to the naked eye; apex tapering; margins almost always with projections which usually taper to cilia-like apices; underlain by smaller scales, including 'arachnioid' scales with fimbriate bases. Lamina 175–525 × 90–220 mm, bipinnate with the basal primary pinnae of some large fronds becoming tripinnate; usually forest green with primary and secondary costae blackish blue. Primary pinnae in 11–25 pairs, the longest 45–120 × 5–38 mm. Secondary pinnae stalked and free towards the base of primary pinnae, becoming sessile and adnate towards the apex of primary pinnae; with sharply pointed apices and usually additional marginal teeth and/or crenulations. Sori round. Indusia peltate, ± flat, ± round, with entire, although often undulate and/or scalloped, margins; persistent; central dark area moderately sized (5–30% surface area).

Flowering:

Not Applicable - Spore Producing

Fruiting:

Not Applicable - Spore Producing

Threats:

Not Threatened

*Attribution:

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (13 November 2012). Description adapted from Perrie et al. (2003).

References and further reading:

de Lange, P.J.; Heenan, P.B.; Rolfe, J.R. 2011: Checklist of vascular plants recorded from the Chatham Island Islands. Department of Conservation, Wellington. 57pp.

Perrie, L.R.; Brownsey, P.J.; Lockhart, P.J.; Large, M.F. 2003A: Evidence for an allopolyploid complex in New Zealand *Polystichum* (Dryopteridaceae). *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 41: 189-215

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=1183



Caption: Sori

Photographer: John Barkla



Caption: Frond of *Polystichum neozelandicum* subsp. *zerophyllum*

Photographer: John Barkla