



Asplenium gracillimum

Common Name(s):

hen & chicken fern

Current Threat Status (2012):

Not Threatened

Distribution:

Indigenous. New Zealand, North, South, Stewart and Chatham Islands. Also in Australia

Habitat:

Coastal to subalpine. Usually in lowland forest where it is a common species of the ground-layer, especially in high rainfall areas. Commonly associated with riparian forest, and as a species of base-rich substrates but also typical of colluvium and stream side banks. It is commonly sympatric with *A. bulbiferum*. *Asplenium gracillimum* appears to have a higher altitudinal range than *A. bulbiferum* and is also more common in drier eastern forests than *A. bulbiferum*. Chatham Island populations of *A. gracillimum* are frequently bulbiferous.

Features*:

Rhizome short, stout, erect, bearing ovate scales up to 15 × 5 mm. Stipes 50-300 mm long, brown on underside, green above, stout, covered in small brown ovate scales with apices drawn into long filiform projections. Laminae lanceolate to elliptic, 0.15-1.20 m, 70-300 mm, bi- to tripinnate, sometimes bearing bulbils. Raches dark green to blue-green, rarely bulbiferous, scaly, prominently grooved. Pinnae 15-30 (or more) pairs, ovate to narrowly ovate, acuminate, shortly stalked, 30-200 × 10-50 mm, scaly on underside, basal pair pointing downwards when fresh. Secondary pinnae sessile or shortly stalked, very narrowly elliptic to ovate or elliptic, obtuse, deeply serrate or sometimes almost pinnate, decreasing in size from base to apex, basal acroscopic pinnule often enlarged (up to 40 × 10 mm). Ultimate pinnules narrowly oblong, ± entire to crenate-serrate, up to 10 mm long. Sori numerous, broad, submarginal, 2-4 mm long.

Flowering:

Not applicable - spore producing

Fruiting:

Not applicable - spore producing

Threats:

Not Threatened

*Attribution:

Description from Brownsey (1977)

References and further reading:

Brownsey, P.J. 1977: A taxonomic revision of the New Zealand species of *Asplenium*. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 15: 39-86.

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 2009 Vol. 11 No. 4 pp. 285-309

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=2055



Caption: Tongariro

Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



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