

Acrostichum speciosum

Family:

Pteridaceae

Botanical name

Acrostichum speciosum Willd.

Link to Australian Plant Name Index for publication details and synonyms:

<https://id.biodiversity.org.au/name/apni/74408>

Common name:

Mangrove Fern

Description

Terrestrial ferns of moist ground, often on muddy \pm saline substrates. Rhizome stout, creeping to erect, with large scales c. 8 mm long and thick fleshy prop roots. Fronds 1–1.5 (–3) m tall. Stipe up to one-third length of frond, scaly at base. Lamina dull green, 1-pinnate (simple in juvenile fronds), stiff, somewhat leathery, glabrous. Pinnae numerous, ascending, narrowly oblong to lanceolate, conspicuously stalked (except perhaps the uppermost ones); upper fertile pinnae smaller; apex narrowed, sometimes with a short abrupt point to c. 5 mm long; pinnae smaller and fertile; lower sterile pinnae usually to c. 10 (–15) cm long, 2.5–3.5 cm wide, sometimes larger; apex narrowly acuminate.; lowermost pinnae sometimes reduced; all pinna margins entire. Secondary veins none; tertiary veins forming a close network of oblique (except for the costal ones) elongate-hexagonal meshes without free included veinlets. Sporangia covering lower surface of fertile pinnae, or only in the apical part; paraphyses abundant, filiform, several-celled with dark end-cells. Spores tetrahedral.

Distribution

Widespread in the Indo-Pacific. In Australia this species occurs along the coastal fringe of WA, NT and QLD from the Kimberley WA to Southport QLD.

Habit and habitat

Terrestrial, usually in the supra-littoral zone on the fringes of riparian and swamp mangrove forest, on the fringes of brackish swamp forest, on the border between mangrove and vine forest or adjacent springs or freshwater river systems.

Natural history

One of few ferns that grow in salt affected areas.

Cultivation

An easy to cultivate fern if placed in bright moist situations in the garden in tropical and subtropical areas. This fern can also be grown in a container in a moisture retentive terrestrial mix. It commonly germinates from spore around the garden, especially in salt affected areas and may be invasive in some situations.

Similar species

Acrostichum speciosum can be distinguished by having narrower pinnae (< 35 mm wide) and shorter rhizome scales (< 10 mm long) from *Acrostichum aureum* which has broader pinnae (40–50 mm wide) and longer rhizome scales (c. 40 mm long).

Citation of Australian Tropical Ferns and Lycophytes

Field AR, Quinn CJ, Zich FA (2022) Australian Tropical Ferns and Lycophytes. apps.lucidcentral.org/fern/text/intro/index.htm (accessed online INSERT DATE).

Field AR, Quinn CJ, Zich FA (2022) '*Platycerium superbum*', in Australian Tropical Ferns and Lycophytes. apps.lucidcentral.org/fern/text/entities/platycerium_superbum.htm (accessed online INSERT DATE).



Close up of frond. © G. Sankowsky



Habit. © G. Sankowsky



Close up of frond. © G. Sankowsky



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