

# *Asplenium nidus*

## Family:

Aspleniaceae

## Botanical name

*Asplenium nidus* L.

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

<https://id.biodiversity.org.au/name/apni/105671>

## Common name:

Birds-Nest Fern

## Description

Ferns with nest-like habit. Rhizome erect, scaly, unbranched with a single growing point. Fronds spreading horizontally before arising in a regular rosette. Stipe indistinct, 1–5 cm long, 5–8 mm wide. Rachis in cross-section prominent and often 2-angled on upper surface, flat or only slightly keeled below. Lamina narrowly obovate, simple, 90–125 cm long, 8.5–15 cm wide, shiny green and ±glabrous; bases narrowly cuneate; margins entire; apices acute; veins free except for a marginal connection. Sori very numerous, close together; longest sori 18–40 mm long, extending from midrib, usually occupying less than half width of lamina. Perisporangia pale with fimbriate broad ridges and fenestrate lacunae; exospores  $42.9\text{--}47.8 \times 28.3\text{--}32.2 \mu\text{m}$  (means).

## Distribution

Torres Strait to the Whitsundays NE QLD. Also widespread in the Palaeotropics.

## Habit and habitat

Epiphytic or lithophytic in high to low rainfall vine forest. It is an abundant canopy epiphyte in low altitude high rainfall rainforest and gallery forest and an abundant lithophyte on rocks, especially in boulder pile vine forest.

## Natural history

This is a large nest-forming species with a rosette of fronds that funnel rain and falling debris into its root system. The root system and debris form a sponge that retains water into dry periods. It is commonly utilised as habitat for other epiphytes and arboreal animals. *Asplenium nidus* is a widely cultivated ornamental fern and many horticultural varieties exist.

## Cultivation

As for *Asplenium australasicum* but more tolerant of hot tropical conditions. It is particularly susceptible to white scale.

## Similar species

1a. Midrib strongly keeled on lower surface = *Asplenium australasicum*

1b. Midrib rounded on lower surface = *Asplenium nidus*

## 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](https://apps.lucidcentral.org/fern/text/intro/index.htm) (accessed online INSERT DATE).

Field AR, Quinn CJ, Zich FA (2022) '*Platyserium superbum*', in Australian Tropical Ferns and Lycophytes. [apps.lucidcentral.org/fern/text/entities/platyserium\\_superbum.htm](https://apps.lucidcentral.org/fern/text/entities/platyserium_superbum.htm) (accessed online INSERT DATE).



Close up of frond showing sori.

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Close up of frond showing upper (adaxial) side. © CSIRO



Frond cross section. © G.

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Habit. © CSIRO



Habit. © A.R. Field



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