

## *Azolla rubra*

**Family:**

Salviniaceae

**Botanical name**

*Azolla rubra* R.Br.

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

<https://id.biodiversity.org.au/name/apni/115407>

**Description**

Free-floating, aquatic ferns. Stem short, creeping, bearing short roots and sometimes trichomes. Leaves small, imbricate, fleshy; margins transparent, bilobed; upper lobe 1–2 mm long, usually minutely to strongly papillate, lacking veins, containing the cyanobacterium *Anabaena azollae* in central cavity; lower lobe submerged and bearing 2–4 megasporangia or microsporangia in axils. Megasporocarps oblong-conical, protected by a membrane-like indusium; megasporangia solitary; basal portion rounded, smooth, pitted or with raised, hexagonal markings surmounted by 3–9 floats. Microsporocarps ovoid to globular, covered by a transparent indusium; microsporangia 7–100, spherical, stalked, containing 4–10 massulae bearing few to many, hooked or non-hooked, septate or non-septate processes. Microspores 32–64, in groups within massulae.

Plants ovate in outline, branching irregularly; roots simple. Leaves triangular; apex rounded; margins membranous and translucent; surface smooth, bright red or green. Microsporangiate massulae spherical, prominently barbed on all surfaces. Megasporocarps brown, partially obscured by leaf lobe. Megasporangia each with 3 apical swimming floats.

**Distribution**

Widely scattered across Australia, mostly in temperate and subtropical areas and in man-made habitats. Also widespread outside Australia.

**Habit and habitat**

Free-floating aquatic fern occurring on still or slow moving water, particularly man-made dams and ponds.

**Similar species**

Plants irregularly branched, roots simple = *Azolla rubra*

Plants regularly branched, roots feathery = *Azolla pinnata*

**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).



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