

Cheilanthes nitida

Family:

Pteridaceae

Botanical name

Cheilanthes nitida (R.Br.) P.S.Green

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

<https://id.biodiversity.org.au/name/apni/62408>

Description

Fronds to 36 cm long and 12 cm wide; stipe and rachis dark brown to black, glabrous or with sparse (rarely moderately dense) hairs (2–6 cells). Lamina ovate or oblong, 2-pinnate at base (innermost basal pinnule may be trifoliolate) and for most of length; larger pinnae triangular; pinnules narrow, linear, at least ten times longer than wide; margins entire or, rarely, lobed; upper surface glabrous or, rarely, with dense, minute, rigid hairs; lower surface glabrous or with short hairs on midrib. Spores tetrahedral, granulose and trilete, with varying amounts of echinate ornamentation, 36–47 µm diam., 32 per sporangium.

Distribution

Tropical Australia, most common in coastal areas in NE QLD and NT.

Habit and habitat

Terrestrial in soil pockets and rock crevices or in shallow soil over rocks in open woodland in semi-arid or monsoonal areas. Not usually a rainforest species but rarely found on exposed granite tors in rainforest.

Natural history

The fronds of this species die back each year and new fronds emerge from the rhizome when rain arrives.

Cultivation

As for *Cheilanthes brownii* but may require a slightly deeper and larger container.

Similar species

Similar to *C. nitida* but the two can be distinguished by the following key:

1a. Fronds 2-pinnate, segments very narrow linear = *Cheilanthes nitida*

1b. Fronds 3–4 pinnate, segments narrow oblong to lanceolate = *Cheilanthes caudata*

Occasional intermediates have been reported, see Fl. Australia 48:281.

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) '*Platyserium superbum*', in Australian Tropical Ferns and Lycophytes. apps.lucidcentral.org/fern/text/entities/platyserium_superbum.htm (accessed online INSERT DATE).



Close up of frond showing sori.

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Frond. © A.R. Field

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