

# *Nephrolepis oblitterata*

## Family:

Nephrolepidaceae

## Botanical name

*Nephrolepis oblitterata* (R.Br.) J.Sm.

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

<https://id.biodiversity.org.au/name/apni/82248>

## Common name:

Sword Fern or Fishbone Fern

## Description

Stolons and basal portions of stipes scaly; scales lanceolate, red-brown, with pale margins (sparse except at growing node), with few to many short or long marginal cilia. Fronds to 1.75 m long; rachis usually glabrous, occasionally with scattered scales. Pinnae relatively widely-spaced, occasionally with a small rounded auricle. Sterile pinnae 20–160 mm long, 15–25 mm wide, usually glabrous; base often obliquely truncate; margins shallowly crenate; upper midrib occasionally with simple hairs; apex acute except in basal pinnae. Fertile pinnae 60–160 (~240) mm long, 5–15 (~20) mm wide; margins more deeply crenate. Sori submarginal; indusium reniform.

## Distribution

Occurs along the NE and E QLD coast from Torres Strait to Stradbroke Island. In NT it has been recorded from Wessel Islands. Also in Malesia and the Pacific Islands.

## Habit and habitat

Terrestrial, lithophytic or occasionally epiphytic from logs and tree bases in rainforest, rainforest margins and open forests. This species forms extensive stands on vegetated rock-piles on Cape York.

## Natural history

A widely cultivated fern that can be invasive in garden and greenhouse situations.

## Cultivation

Readily cultivated in a wide range of situations. Can be a weed.

## Similar species

*Nephrolepis oblitterata* can be distinguished from other Australian *Nephrolepis* by the presence of sori near the pinnae margins, usually opening towards the margin.

### Key to Australian *Nephrolepis* spp.:

1a. Sori linear with a linear indusium and borne on margin; pinnae with entire margins = *Nephrolepis acutifolia*

1b. Sori round or kidney-shaped with a kidney-shaped indusium and borne supramedially to medially, each on the end of a vein, margins ~ crenate = 2

2a. Pinnae with an obtuse apex, less than 50 mm long = 3

2b. Pinnae with an acute to attenuate apex, greater than 50 mm long = 4

3a. Rachis with scales, rarely hairy, basal auricles of pinnae overlapping rachis = *Nephrolepis cordifolia*

3b. Rachis with hairs, rarely scaly, basal auricles of pinnae not usually overlapping rachis = *Nephrolepis arida*

4a. Pinnae with an acroscopic basal auricle; all parts hirsute = 5

4b. Pinnae lacking a distinct acroscopic basal auricle, indumentum sparse = 5

5a. Hairs on upper side of costae absent; rachis scales rufous, with strongly dentate acumen; sori submarginal = *Nephrolepis hirsutula*

5b. Hairs on upper side of costa present; rachis scales hyaline or light brown (rarely rufous), with nearly entire acumen; sori submedial = *Nephrolepis brownii*

6a. Sori borne close to margin, stolons densely scaly = *Nephrolepis biserrata*

6b Sori borne medially, stolons green with few scales = *Nephrolepis oblitterata*

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Close up of frond showing sori.

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Close up of frond showing sori.

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Close up of frond showing upper (adaxial) surface. © G. Sankowsky



Habit. © G. Sankowsky



Habit. © CSIRO

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