

Psilotum nudum

Family:

Psilotaceae

Botanical name

Psilotum nudum (L.) P.Beauv.

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

<https://id.biodiversity.org.au/name/apni/88129>

Common name:

Skeleton fork fern

Description

Epiphytic or terrestrial plants. Rhizome branching, creeping, but often clumped. Aerial shoots erect, firm or sometimes flaccid in shaded situations, branched repeatedly in different planes in the upper part, 10–85 cm long. Branches prominently 3–7-ribbed, subterete in cross-section, to 4.5 mm diam.; stomata restricted to furrows between ribs. Sterile leaves restricted to ribs, subspiral, 1–2.5 mm long, terete, pale yellow, translucent towards the tips. Synangia 1.5–2 mm long, 2–2.5 mm wide.

Distribution

Widespread in tropical and subtropical Australia. Also widespread in the tropics and subtropics globally.

Habit and habitat

Epiphytic, lithophytic or occasionally terrestrial in a broad spectrum of mesic or seasonally forest types. Commonly seen growing from a crack in rocks or between the roots of a strangler fig and its host tree.

Natural history

This widespread species also naturalises in garden situations and urban areas. It is widely cultivated as an ornamental plant.

Cultivation

Readily cultivated in a hanging basket or pot of coarse free draining material. It takes a while to establish but plants are very long lived and grow into large specimens.

Similar species

Psilotum nudum has more or less terete ultimate forks whereas *Psilotum companatum* has flattened ultimate forks.

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).



Habit. © CSIRO



Close up of frond showing synangia. © CSIRO

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