

Pteridium esculentum

Family:

Dennstaedtiaceae

Botanical name

Pteridium esculentum (G.Forst.) Cockayne

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

<https://id.biodiversity.org.au/name/apni/57515>

Common name:

Common bracken, Austral Bracken

Description

Stipe and rachis chestnut-brown at base, yellow-brown at apex, bearing sparse non-glandular hairs or ±glabrous; stipe 15–90 cm long, 3–8 mm diam., woody. Lamina broadly elliptic or broadly ovate, 25–c. 150 cm long, 20–c. 100 cm wide, 3–4-pinnate at base, glabrous above, with sparse red-brown hairs on midribs and dense colourless appressed non-glandular hairs along veins of undersurface. Longest primary pinnae arising at narrow angles, longest 15–65 cm long, 8–40 cm wide. Secondary pinnae arising at narrow angles; longest 5–26 cm long, 15–130 mm wide; basal one often much-reduced; midribs of primary and secondary pinnae narrowly winged. Tertiary pinnae decreasing markedly in length along secondary pinna; longest 7–70 mm long, 2–20 mm wide, with winged midribs. Quaternary pinnae to 12 mm long and 4 mm wide; ultimate pinnules linear, straight, acute, entire, adnate and decurrent on 1 side. Indusium more than 0.2 mm wide, membranous, entire, glabrous. Spores dark, granulose.

Distribution

Occurs in NT, QLD, ACT, Vic, Tas, SA, WA, and also in Lord Howe Island and Norfolk Island. Widespread in the southern hemisphere.

Habit and habitat

Terrestrial, forming extensive colonies in damp sandy areas in pasture, roadsides, open wet-sclerophyll forests and clearings.

Natural history

Common weed of agricultural land that has been implicated in poisoning stock.

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



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



Frond. © G. Sankowsky



Habit. © G. Sankowsky

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