

Selaginella willdenowii

Family:

Selaginellaceae

Botanical name

Selaginella willdenowii (Desv. ex Poir.) Baker

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

<https://id.biodiversity.org.au/name/apni/116668>

Common name:

Electric Fern

Description

Young plant erect but soon climbing to several metres (sometimes procumbent), the main stem smooth, glossy, straw coloured, bearing widely spaced appressed leaves directed along the axis, the leaves oblong, the apex obtuse, the base heart-shaped, the margin entire, to ca. 3 mm long. Sterile leaves on the branches usually with a bluish-green, metallic hue, overlapping, of two types: median leaves appressed, directed along the axis, to ca. 2.5 mm long, becoming progressively small towards the tips of the branches, ovate-sickle-shaped to somewhat oblong-sickle-shaped in outline, the apex acuminate, narrow, but the tip rounded, the base oblique; lateral leaves widely spreading, to ca. 4 mm long, becoming progressively smaller towards the tips of the branches, oblong-sickle-shaped to narrowly ovate-sickle-shaped in outline, the apex obtuse, the base on the side nearest the base of the stem truncate the, the upper base with a translucent rounded undulating lobe which overlaps the stem. Fertile spikes terminal on the branches, more or less square in cross-section, mostly 5–12 mm long, 1.5–2 mm wide; fertile leaves all of one type, broadly ovate, acuminate, acute, keeled, slightly spreading, the margin entire, ca. 1–1.5 mm or slightly more long, those subtending the macrosporangia large than the rest.



Close up of frond. © Australian Tropical Herbarium



Habit. © Australian Tropical Herbarium

Distribution

Sparingly naturalised in the Cairns-Daintree region of NE QLD. Originally a cultivated plant from Asia.

Habit and habitat

A terrestrial species that climbs trees in well-lit wet rainforested areas.

Cultivation

Easily cultivated in a moist tropical garden.

Citation of Australian Tropical Ferns and Lycophytes

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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).

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