

Sphaeropteris australis

Family:

Cyatheaceae

Botanical name

Sphaeropteris australis (C.Presl) R.M.Tryon

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

<https://id.biodiversity.org.au/name/apni/85354>

Description

Rhizome erect to 7 m tall, to 15 cm diam. Fronds to 3 m long; stipe bases bearing sharp spines to 4 mm long; scales whitish, with (often sparse) dark marginal setae, to 60 mm long, 1 mm wide at their bases; scales above base copious, small, setiferous. Pinnae to 70 cm long; pinnules c. 10 cm long and 2 cm wide, deeply lobed; most lobes adnate as crenate-serrate tertiary pinnules; costal and costular scales very small; larger ones bearing many short setae, smaller ones fringed with short hairs; a few scales also present on veins. Sori near costules, covered when immature with small very thin scales, these sometimes bearing minute dark setae; scales usually not persistent; paraphyses sparse, shorter than the sporangia.

Distribution

Endemic to eastern Australia with outlying populations in NE QLD known from Eungella, Mt Elliot and Mt Bellenden Ker.

Habit and habitat

Terrestrial on rainforest margins and along streams in open areas.

Natural history

Named after famous explorer Ludwig Leichhardt who collected the type in the Bunya Mountains. This is a relatively rare tree fern in the tropics.

Similar species

Distinguished from *Sphaeropteris celebica* by mature sori being naked (cf. covered in scales in *S. celebica*)

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. © APII



Close up of frond showing sori.

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



Stipe. © G. Sankowsky



Stipe scales. © G. Sankowsky

