

FERNS OF NE TASMANIA FIELD NOTES

Most ferns have fronds with a stalk (stipe) and leaflets (pinnae) which arise from a leaf stalk (rachis) and are divided into pinnules. Spores usually occur on the underside of the pinnules grouped together in sori. The sori may have protective covers (indusia). Ferns are anchored into the substrate by a rhizome. They can be Terrestrial (T), Lithophytic (L) (growing on rock), or Epiphytic (E) (growing on other plants).

Bracken - *Pteridium esculentum* - leathery fronds emerging singly from a spreading rhizome; stipe is green-brown to red-brown and mainly hairless; pinnules with sunken veins and conspicuous mid-veins. Sori are linear and almost continuous along margins, protected by strongly reflexed leaf margins and narrow indusia. New emerging fronds (croziers) with a dense cover of brown hairs. (Little Chook, Northeast Park) T

Common ground fern/Rainbow fern/False bracken - *Calochlaena dubia* - bright, yellow-green, triangular fronds; stipe is red with soft brown hairs and a wide, shallow groove on the stipe which continues into the pinnae rachises, lower rachises are deeply grooved. Sori are round and occur near the margins of the pinnules, covered by cup shaped structures formed from curved-over leaf margins and small, pale, membranous indusia. Newly emerging fronds, (croziers) are bright green. (Northeast Park, Mt Stronach walk). T

Ruddy ground fern - *Hypolepis rugosula* - mid to dark green fronds emerging singly from a spreading rhizome; stipe is red-brown; rachises and fronds feel sticky due to fine hairs on both surfaces, rachises are red-brown and narrowly grooved with 2 prominent ridges, groove does not continue into the pinnae rachises. Sori are round and partially protected by a reflexed marginal flap. Often occurs with batwing fern. (Little Chook, Northeast Park) T

Bat's wing fern - *Histiopteris incisa* - very soft, light green fronds with opposite pinnae giving the resemblance to a bat's wings. Sori are sub-marginal, occurring as lines along the sides but not the tips of pinnules, protected by pale, membranous, reflexed margins. Often occurs with ruddy ground fern. (Little Chook, Northeast Park) T

Fishbone fern - *Blechnum nudum* - vegetative fronds are soft and light green, emerging as a clump; pinnae are broadly attached to leaflet stalk (rachis) and arranged like fishbones with largest pinnae near centre of leaflet and diminishing towards both apex and base; fertile fronds are narrower with sori forming continuous bands either side of the midveins of the pinnae. Sori are protected by membranous indusia. Can form a sturdy trunk up to 1 metre. (Little Chook, Northeast Park) T

Hard water fern - *Blechnum watsii* - vegetative fronds are large, leathery, and dark green with conspicuous veins, emerging as a clump; pinnae are shortly stalked; fertile fronds are narrower with sori forming continuous bands either side of the midveins of the pinnae. Sori are protected by membranous indusia. (Little Chook, Northeast Park) T, L

Soft water fern - *Blechnum minus* - vegetative fronds are often crinkled, fertile fronds of similar length but often drooping. Pinnae are shortly stalked and markedly shorter towards the stipe. (Northeast Park) T

Mother shield fern - *Polystichum proliferum* - mid-green fronds emerging from a short trunk and forming an upright rosette, with occasional buds emerging near tips of large fronds; pinnules asymmetrical; dark reddy-brown scales on base of stipe. Sori are round, with stalked, umbrella-shaped indusia when young or dark centres after indusia are shed. (Little Chook, Northeast Park) T

Scrambling coral fern - *Gleichenia microphylla* - scrambling fern with light green fronds; pinnules rounded, leaf margins not curved; rachis bare. Sori have 3–5 large, distinct spore clusters with no indusia. (Northeast Park) T

King fern - *Todea barbara* - leathery, glossy, mid green fronds, emerging as a clump from a short trunk; short stipe; pinnae acutely angled to rachis. Spores thickly cover the under surfaces of pinnules near the base of fronds, no indusia. (North East Park wetland) T

Man fern - *Dicksonia antarctica* - leathery fronds emerging from a tall trunk; pinnae are stalked; stipe and rachis with a narrow groove on upper surface, rachis hairy on both surfaces. Sori are small and round, covered by cup shaped structures formed from curved-over leaf margins and fawn, membranous indusia. (Little Chook, Northeast Park) T, E

Kangaroo fern - *Microsorium pustulatum* - grows on tree trunks and manferns or among boulders; fronds usually undivided or simply divided with prominent, branching veins. Sori are large and round with no indusia. (Little Chook, Northeast Park) L, E

Common fork fern - *Tmesipteris obliqua* - growing on manfern or tree trunks - simple 'leaves' along the stem are arranged spirally; spores in large capsules. (Little Chook, Northeast Park) T, L, E

Filmy ferns - *Hymenophyllum sp.* - small ferns growing on man-ferns, tree trunks or rocks; delicate fronds only one cell thick, sori are at the end of pinnules, with two-lipped indusia. (Little Chook, Northeast Park). E

Finger fern - *Notogrammitis billardierei* - grows on tree trunks, manferns, logs and rocks; a small fern with erect, narrow, undivided fronds. Sori are elliptical and oblique to mid-vein. (Little Chook). L, E

Leathery shield fern - *Rumohra adiantiformis*- grows from ground or on manferns, tree trunks, logs or rocks. Triangular, leathery, glossy, dark green fronds(almost look like plastic); stipe is long, deeply grooved on upper surface and covered with papery, brown scales; rachis is grooved with a raised centre on upper surface. Sori are round with immature sori covered by square, stalked indusia. When shed, the indusia leave dark, central spots in the middle of the sori. (Little Chook). T, L, E

Mother spleenwort - *Asplenium bulbiferum subspecies gracillimum* - growing on logs, man ferns, tree trunks and among boulders; fronds narrow, pale to dark green, thin textured; upper surface of rachis with raised central rib; may have buds on fronds which develop into new plants. Sori are oblong with firm indusia near margins of pinnules. (Little Chook). T, L, E

Pouched coral fern - *Gleichenia dicarpa* - scrambling fern with light green fronds; pinnules rounded; rachis hairy and scaly; leaf margins curved over to form pouches. Sori are hidden in pouches with 2 large, distinct spore clusters per pouch. T

Necklace fern - *Asplenium flabellifolium* - small fern; narrow fronds with fan-shaped pinnae. Sori are oblong, occurring along veins with delicate indusia. (Rail trail cuttings). T, L, E

Gypsy fern - *Notogrammitis heterophylla* - growing on manferns or tree trunks, fallen logs or rocks; firm, divided fronds, varying in size. Sori oval, away from margins, no indusia. L, E

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Debbie Searle 2022 - I take full responsibility for any errors.