

# Dryopteris filix-mas

## COMMON NAMES

male fern

## BIOSTATUS

Exotic

## CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stout rhizomatous fern. **Laminae bipinnate** up to 125 x 30 cm, dark green above, paler green below. **Primary pinnae** in 25–50 pairs, secondary pinnae in 15–30 pairs. **Sori** round, 1–5 pairs on each secondary pinnae.

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Dryopteris* is closely related to *Polystichium* and *Lastreopsis*, but distinguished from *Polystichium* by the kidney-shaped indusia, and from *Lastreopsis* by its abundance of stipe-scales and absence of hairs. *D. filix-mas* is closely related to *D. affinis* but can be distinguished by the second pinnae being round-ended and margins toothed throughout.

## HABITAT

Terrestrial. Streamsides, open scrub, damp forest.

## GENUS

*Dryopteris*

## FAMILY

Dryopteridaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Dryopteris filix-mas* (L.) Schott

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## YEAR NATURALISED

1958

## ORIGIN

Europe, Asia, N. America

## REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental

## LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Reproduces sexually from spores.



*Dryopteris filix-mas*. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Dunedin Town belt. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

## ENVIRONMENTAL WEED (2024)

**This plant is named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand 2024 prepared by DOC.** 759 candidate species were considered for inclusion on this new comprehensive list of environmental weeds in New Zealand. The species considered were drawn from published lists of weed species, lists of plants that must be reported or managed by law if observed, existing national and regional programmes and agreements for pest management, and species already managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Candidate species were then assessed to see if they were fully naturalised and whether they have more than minor impacts in natural ecosystems. Read the full report [here](#).

## NVS CODE

DRYFIL

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/dryopteris-filix-mas/>

## PDF DATE

27 May 2026