

Cystopteris fragilis

COMMON NAME

brittle bladder fern

SYNONYMS

Cystopteris laciniata Colenso

FAMILY

Cystopteridaceae

AUTHORITY

Cystopteris fragilis (L.) Bernh.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

NVS CODE

CYSFRA

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

DISTRIBUTION

Naturalised. New Zealand: North Island, South Island (from Auckland south to Dunedin). Also Northern Hemisphere, South Africa and South America.

HABITAT

Locally common in suitable sites along stream sides, ditches on damp stone walls, in muddy ground under willows (*Salix* spp.), and in shaded sites in grassland, along track sides and on roadside banks. In some areas it can be a very common fern on damp basalt and concrete walls bordering streams, ditches and channels.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Terrestrial or lithophytic, deciduous ferns. **Rhizome** short-creeping, scaly, scales thin, black, black-brown, glossy. **Fronde** tufted, crowded, 100–450 mm long. **Stipes** 50–150 mm long, scaly at base, glabrous above. **Laminae** 10–300 × 60–140 mm wide, yellow-green, ovate to narrowly ovate, membranous, very delicate, glabrous, with widely spaced pinnae. **Primary pinnae** 30–80 × 15–40 mm, ovate to deltoid, apices tapering. **Secondary pinnae** 10–20 × 5–10 mm, ovate to oblong, lower most deeply lobed and/or divided into tertiary pinnae, apices acute. **Sori** numerous, rounded, in one row either side of midrib set away from pinna margins, submarginal; indusium ovate, pale delicate, attached at broader end to a vein arching over sori.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from *Cystopteris tasmanica* by the larger, more divided fronds and longer primary pinnae with tapering apices.

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Somewhat weedy. Prefers a damp, shaded site, planted in a deep, moist, lime-enriched soil. However, this fern is not particularly fussy about soil fertility, flourishing in a range of soil types provided the sites are seasonally damp and shaded.

YEAR NATURALISED

1899

ORIGIN

N. Temperate, C. and S. America



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ETYMOLOGY

cystopteris: From the Greek kystis 'bag' and pteris 'wing' or 'fern', alluding to the sack-like covering of the sori

Fact Sheet Prepared for NZPCN by: P.J. de Lange (18 January 2012). Description adapted from Brownsey & Smith-Dodsworth (2000). Family follows Rothfels et al. (2012).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Brownsey PJ, Smith-Dodsworth JC. 2000. New Zealand Ferns and Allied Plants. David Bateman, Auckland, NZ. 168 p.

Rothfels CJ, Sundue MA, Kuo Li-Y, Larsson A, Kato M, Schuettpelz E, Pryer KM. 2012. A revised family-level classification for eupolypod II ferns (Polypodiidae: Polypodiales). *Taxon* 61(3): 515–533.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/tax.613003>.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/cystopteris-fragilis/>