

## ***Pteridium esculentum***

**Commonly: Bracken**

**Vascular Plant Family: Dennstaedtiaceae**

*Pteridium esculentum* is a native terrestrial fern which can reach up to 2m tall. The underground stem is long and black. The fronds are erect dark green above and paler beneath. This fern is widespread, especially in damp areas, and although it is a native species many people think it is a weed due to its rampant nature.



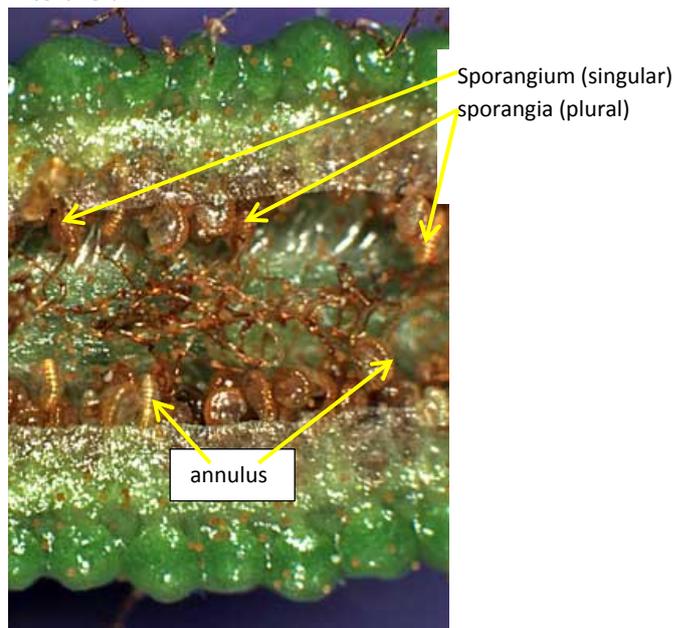
The fronds are dark-green and leathery with the blade divided 3 to 4 times.



The spore cases are continuous on the lower surface but not visible due to the recurved margin. There are scattered rusty brown hairs along on the underside of the frond.



This shows the individual spore cases (sporangia). Each has a thickened wall called the annulus, which straightens out at maturity and rips apart the sporangium. When this occurs spores are released into the air.



Refer also to Peppy Plants article [Pteridium esculentum](#)