



Pteris vittata

Common Name(s):

ladder brake, Chinese brake

Current Threat Status (2009):

Non Resident Native - Coloniser

Distribution:

Indigenous? New Zealand: North Island (Bay of Plenty - in geothermal areas, especially along the shores of Lake Rotomahana). However, also reported as naturalised from Auckland City and Napier. Also present in Australia, Norfolk Island (where it may be indigenous but is currently regarded as naturalised - see de Lange et al. 2005), and throughout the tropical to warm temperate parts of the Old World.

Habitat:

On base rich rocks such as limestone, basalt, and also concrete. All recent records are urban but previously was reported from the margins of a geothermal spring (Tarawera Springs)

Features*:

Terrestrial or lithophytic ferns. Rhizome short-creeping; scale numerous, conspicuous, c.5 mm long, narrowly triangular, pale brown. Fronds monomorphic, arching, appearing to radiate from a crown. Stipe 20-250 mm long, pale brown, grooved, scaly towards base. Lamina 0.15-0.8 × 0.05-0.3 m, 1-pinnate, oblong-obovate. Pinnae to 250 mm long, closely spaced, decreasing in length from apex to base, narrowly oblong, ± falcate, and tapering above to an acute apex, base subcordate, ± overlying rachis; margins finely serrate in sterile zones; most pinnae attached by midrib only. Lowermost pinnae distinctly shorter, deltoid to cordate; terminal pinna longest, veins free set at ± 90 degrees to costa, simple or forked once, Paraphyses abundant.

Flowering:

Not applicable - spore producing

Fruiting:

Not applicable - spore producing

Threats:

Unknown. If this species was truly present at the Tarawera Springs it has now gone extinct there but it is abundant around the hot springs of Lake Rotomahana, and it is still locally present in Auckland and Napier - where it may have established from garden plants.

*Attribution:

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (18 January 2012). Description adapted from Kramer & McCarthy (1998).

References and further reading:

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For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=2383



Caption: Geothermal area around Lake Rotomahana

Photographer: Paul Cashmore



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