

Pteris pacifica

COMMON NAME

Pacific brake

FAMILY

Pteridaceae

AUTHORITY

Pteris pacifica Hieron.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

DISTRIBUTION

Naturalised. New Zealand: North Island (Auckland). Indigenous to Australia (north-eastern Queensland), Malesia and the South Pacific Islands.

HABITAT

Collected twice from the Auckland region as an uncommon weed of an urban garden and from an urban, much modified indigenous forest remnant.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Large terrestrial fern. **Rhizome** short, erect, scaly; scales narrowly triangular with a dark central band and broad hyaline erose margins. **Fron**d slightly dimorphic. **Stipe** erect, 0.15–0.95 m long, pale yellow-brown, base invested with attenuate scales 13.0 × 0.5 mm. **Lamina** ± as long as stipe, yellow-green, 1-pinnate-pinnatifid, oblong or ovate, herbaceous to chartaceous. **Pinnae** narrowly ovate, attenuate; largest pinnae 100–300 × 25–40 mm; lowermost pinna with 1 or 2 large pinnatifid pinnules growing from the lower side close to the rachis; pinna lobes cut almost to costa, linear, obtuse, c.3 mm wide; abaxially minutely hairy, glabrescent; adaxially bearing spine-like growths on the costules; veins free, usually once-forked. **Sori** not usually extending to bases and apices of pinna segments; indusium very narrow, entire; paraphyses abundant.

SIMILAR TAXA

Pteris pacifica has a passing resemblance to both *P. cretica* and *P. vittata*. From *Pteris vittata*, *P. pacifica* differs by the yellow-green frond, and by the presence of 1 or more large pinnatifid pinnules growing from the undersides of the lower most pinna close to the rachis. This feature is shared with *P. cretica* from which it differs by its yellow-green colour, and by the sterile margins of the pinnae entire to obscurely dentate or lobulate.

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Fickle from spores but plants are easily grown, provided they are planted in a warm, sheltered, semi-shaded site, within a free draining, fertile, humus-enriched, moist soil. Like many *Pteris*, *P. pacifica* benefits from regular applications of lime. *Pteris pacifica* is frost sensitive.

YEAR NATURALISED

1999

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Disposal Method

Hand pull and destroy. Marginal habitat in New Zealand so unlikely to be invasive.

ETYMOLOGY

pteris: A fern known to the ancient Greeks; from the Greek pteris

pacifica: Of the Pacific Ocean.



Notes

Pteris pacifica is only very occasionally cultivated in the warmer parts of New Zealand. It has been collected wild twice in the Auckland region, in a garden and in indigenous forest within an urban area. In both situations this species had not been knowingly cultivated nearby and so it is assumed that spores had blown in from elsewhere in Auckland. It is possible that both occurrences stem from natural dispersal from Australia (J.E. Braggins pers. comm.) but because this species has been cultivated in Auckland City (e.g., University of Auckland) it is more likely to have self-established from plantings such as these.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet Prepared for NZPCN by: P.J. de Lange (18 January 2012). Description adapted from Brownsey & Smith-Dodsworth (2000) and Kramer & McCarthy (1998)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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

Kramer KU, McCarthy PM. 1998. Pteridiaceae. *Flora of Australia 48, Ferns Gymnosperms and allied groups*: 241–248. ABRS/CSIRO Victoria, Australia.

Heenan PB, de Lange PJ, Glenny DS, Breitwieser I, Brownsey PJ, Ogle CC. 1999. Checklist of dicotyledons, gymnosperms, and pteridophytes naturalised or casual in New Zealand: additional records 1997–1998. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 37(4): 629–642. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.1999.9512658>.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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