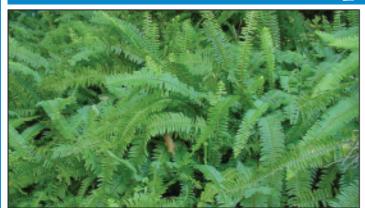
Weed Profile Fishbone Fern (Nephrolepis cordifolia)



Though Fishbone Fern is a native species to Australia, it has become a weed in bushland areas in Sydney.

Originally from Northern Australia, this fern was brought to Sydney as pot plants and a hardy and fast growing landscaping species. It spreads mainly via the matted network of rhizomes that lie just below the surface of the soil. It also spreads by spores that can germinate in damp conditions. Growing to 80cm high, this weed fern can form a dense groundcover monoculture, out-competing indigenous species and preventing the germination of indigenous seed. Fishbone Fern seems to grow well in damp or dry conditions, shade or full sun.

Control of Fishbone Fern can be time consuming. It does not respond well herbicide spray, often needing repeated applications before killing the weed. Hand removal if effective, but every tuber and piece of rhizome must be removed from the soil, or the plant will regenerate. A site where Fishbone Fern has been removed should be revisited, as it will invariably have regenerating pieces from spores or missed rhizomes.

Though fast spreading, its habit of forming a dense monoculture can be a benefit to bushland regenerators by acting as a barrier to weeds that are more damaging to bushland.

Weed Rating

Fishbone Fern Nephrolepis cordifolia



Lyn McDougall and Robin Buchanan, Weed Profile Sheets produced for Ryde TAFE, 1994. "Winning The War On Weeds", Mark A.

Winter 2002 Wolff, 1999, Kangaroo Press.

Identification



Leaves: Opposite or serrated, glossy lime

alternate. Lightly green. 80cm long, 3-9cm wide.

Stalks:

Brown and woody.



Rhizomes:

Erect rhizomes often bearing globular tubers and often forming mats.



Tubers:

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Brown, waterfilled and covered with brown scales. Used for the storage of water and nutrients.

Weed rating: Weed profiles will now give a rating out of five to indicate the long-term damage the weed loes to the bushland considering time consumed to remove, seed longevity and rate of spread. These ratings are purely the author's opinion and the opinon of others is encouraged. Ratings for previously profiled weeds are:

Broad-leaf Privet Ligustrum lucidum 💂 💂 Green Cestrum Cestrum parqui Panic Veldgrass Ehrharta erecta Trad Tradescantia fluminensis Lantana Lantana camara Cobblers Pegs Bidens pilosa

Asparagus Fern Asparagus aethiopicus 🌷 👺 👺 👺

Native Ferns of Mosman

Gristle Fern Blechnum cartilagineum



A robust and harsh fern forming tufts to 60-100cm high. The finely toothed fronds of this fern vary from being a rosy pink when young, to a light green or dark green. Commonly found in wet sclerophyll forests.

In Mosman, it is abundantly found at Rosherville Reserve, with small patches found in sheltered areas of Balmoral, Lawry Plunkett and Quakers Hat Reserve. In large tufts, this fern is a favourite foraging place for small birds such as the Superb Blue Wren.



Rasp Fern Doodia aspera



A small tufting fern with rough, stiff fronds. Usually found in colonies in shady, damp areas on the floor of rainforest and wet sclerophyll forest.

Can be confused with the weed Nephrolepis cordifolia (Fishbone Fern). However, the fronds of Rasp Fern are very rough to the touch, stalks are black, and young fronds are pink to red in colour.



Fragrant Fern Microsorum scandens



Its common name is taken from the musky smell exuded from the fresh fronds of this fern. It is mostly found in subtropical rainforest, often in dense colonies of rocks and trees.

In Mosman, this epiphytic (growing on trees or rocks, but not parasitic) fern is only found in the deep gullies of Reid Park.



Winter 2002

Reference: Les Robinson, Field Guide to the Native Plants of Sydney, Kangaroo Press, 1991 (second edition)