

AN INTRODUCTORY SELECTION OF BOOKS ON FERNS AND FERN ALLIES

(Compiled by Jennifer Ide)

Some of the older books are no longer in print, but may be found in libraries or second-hand.

Note

pteridophytes - this is a collective term for ferns and the fern allies, namely the horsetails, clubmosses and quillworts. It is used in this list for brevity.

Key to superscripts

¹ Many of the books in the list include a description of the structure (morphology) of ferns, but these have been selected as particularly useful.

² Most of the books in the list include a description of the life cycle of ferns, but these have been selected as being particularly good.

³ Recommended for beginners, though experienced growers may also find them useful.

⁴ Available from BPS Special Publications; e-mail: SpecialPublications@eBPS.org.uk)

IDENTIFICATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF BRITISH PTERIDOPHYTES

³ Jermy, Clive & Josephine Camus 1991 **The Illustrated Field Guide to Ferns and Allied Plants of the British Isles** The Natural History Museum Publications, London ISBN 0 565 01172 3

For both the beginner and the experienced naturalist. Identification is via a simple key leading to a basic, but sound description of each species. Growth habit and leaf detail are illustrated with excellent line drawings for critical identification. Vocabulary associated with basic frond structure clearly described with an illustration. Not the first choice text for introductory descriptions of the general structure of pteridophytes and the pteridophyte life cycle. Not in print.

^{1,2,3} Merryweather, James & M. Hill 1992 **The Fern Guide: A field guide to the ferns, clubmosses, quillworts and horsetails of the British Isles.** Field Studies Council, Aidgap series, Preston Montford. ISBN 1 85153 211 0

Ideal for the absolute beginner. A Field Studies Council AIDGAP key. All species and one hybrid included. Probably the best guide for the absolute beginner. Careful illustrations accompany each stage in the key. Full descriptions of the species are not given; for this the beginner is recommended to Jermy and Camus (1991). Still in print.

^{3,4} Rickard, M. & B.A. Thomas 1988 **British Ferns** Schering Agriculture, and the National Museum of Wales

This 25 minute video shows most of Britain's native ferns growing in their natural habitats. It illustrates the wide diversity of form and the broad range of habitats they colonise. The key characters for identification are indicated for each species. The video is available from BPS Merchandise Sales, £10 including postage and packing, or for loan from the Secretary of the British Pteridological Society, for £3.00. (Please send a stamped addressed envelope for further details, or see the Society's website, www.BPS.org.uk)

^{1,2} Hutchinson, G. & B.A. Thomas 1996 (7th Edition) **Welsh Ferns** National Museums and Galleries of Wales, Cardiff ISBN 0 7200 04 35 7

*Welsh ferns are described in detail with briefer accounts of other British species. Each description includes maps showing the distribution of the species in Wales and Europe. Structure and life cycle of ferns described with reference to *Dryopteris filix-mas*, the male fern; fern allies not described. More advanced than the above texts. In print.*

Page, C.N. 1997 (2nd edn.) **The Ferns of Britain and Ireland** Cambridge University Press, Cambridge ISBN 0 521 58658 5

A flora for the advanced student of ferns. Very full botanical descriptions of all species and known hybrids in the British Isles, including their ecology and distribution. Expensive! Still in print.

Jahns, H. M. 1980 **Collins Guide to the Ferns Mosses & Lichens of Britain and Northern and Central Europe** Collins, London ISBN 0 00 219254 3

Not a formal key, but has useful coloured photographs of native pteridophytes. Not in print.

Phillips, Roger 1980 **Grasses, Ferns, Mosses & Lichens of Great Britain and Ireland** Pan Books, ISBN 0 330 25959 8

Not a formal key, but has useful coloured photographs of native pteridophytes. In print.

Wardlaw, A.C. & Leonard, A. (eds.) 2005 **New Atlas of Ferns & Allied Plants of Britain & Ireland** BPS Special Publication No 8 ISBN 0 9509806-7-6

Based on the BSBI's New Atlas of the British & Irish Flora(2002), gives distribution maps for all native and some naturalised pteridophytes.

FERNS IN CULTIVATION.

Druery, C.T. 1910 **British Ferns and their Varieties** George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.

A highly prized volume by those besotted by the varieties of British ferns! Nature prints, wood cuts and monochrome reprints abound amidst the descriptions of British ferns and their varietal forms. Each species, with its varieties, is given its own chapter. Long out of print, but for the real enthusiast worth seeking out.

Dyce, J.W. 1992 **Annotations by Dr. F.W. Stansfield on British Ferns and Their Varieties by C.T. Druery** British Pteridological Society

A little 12 page booklet well worth having if one possesses a copy of Druery's book, above. To quote J.W. Dyce in his introduction, "It is felt that the annotations enhance the value of [Druery's] book as an important reference work, which is regarded by fern growers as one of our ... bibles."

^{2,3,4}Dyce, J.W. 1993(2nd Edition) **The Cultivation and Propagation of British Ferns** The British Pteridological Society. Special Publication No. 3, London ISBN 0 950806 2 5

A very sound introduction to the cultivation of ferns by the Emeritus President of the British Pteridological Society. All the beginner needs to know.

Grounds, Roger 1975 **Ferns** Readers Union, Newton Abbot (originally published by Pelham Books Ltd.)

The prime object of the book is to enable people to identify ferns in the wild and in cultivation, but this is also a book for the gardener. In it are described not only British ferns, but also ferns of other temperate regions of the world including the North American continent and Australasia, and their varieties. There is no key, but the ferns are grouped according to habitat. The description of each plant is accompanied by an assessment of its garden merit and notes on its cultivation. No longer in print, but worth seeking out.

Hoshizaki, Barbara J., & Moran, Robbin C. 2001 **Fern Grower's Manual** Timber Press, Portland, Oregon ISBN 0 88192 495 4

An encyclopedic, but expensive, guide to 700 fern species with cultivation instructions. Aimed primarily at the American market but useful for Britain also. In print.

^{1,2}Kaye, Reginald 1968, 1980 **Hardy Ferns** Faber & Faber Ltd. London, republished by the British Pteridological Society. Standard book no. 571082084

A first class guide to the growing of ferns. Selection of cultivated varieties described, with suggestions what to plant where. Not in print, but secondhand copies relatively common.

^{2,3}Kelly, John 1991 **Ferns in your Garden** Souvenir Press Ltd., London ISBN 0 285 630237

The photographs are stunning in this well illustrated book, which alerts gardeners to the possibilities of ferns in their garden. As well as where to plant them, advice is given on the choice of ferns and how to plant and care for them. Not in print.

¹Mickel, John 1994/2003 **Ferns for American Gardens** hbk: Macmillan, New York, 1994, ISBN 0 02 584491 1; pbk Timber Press. Portland, USA. Cambridge, UK, 2003, ISBN 0 88192 598 5. In print.

One of the best books for coverage of varieties as well as species. To quote from the BPS review: "Readers in Britain should not be put off by the American Garden label. Many of the ferns discussed are available in the [UK]." The description of the structure of ferns is unusual in that it identifies ferns exhibiting variations in the basic structure and also includes a short introduction to the most common morphological varietal types. A very useful book for anyone interested in growing ferns. In print.

³Rickard, Martin 2000 **The Plantfinder's Guide to Garden Ferns** David Charles, Newton Abbott, Devon/Timber Press, Portland, Oregon. ISBN 0 88192 476 8

An excellent, and beautifully illustrated book dealing with virtually all the ferns, British and foreign, that can be grown in a British garden. Very reasonably priced. A must for all fern enthusiasts. Still in print.

³Rickard, Martin H. 2003 **Ferns** RHS Wisley Handbooks, The Royal Horticultural Society/Cassell Illustrated, London ISBN 1 84403 063 6

Although concise, this beautifully illustrated handbook contains detailed information on all aspects of fern care and a useful directory of recommended varieties. Still in print

Rush, Richard 1984 **A Guide to Hardy Ferns** British Pteridological Society, London ISBN 0 9509806 0 9

No longer in print, but this comprehensive list of ferns in cultivation in Britain in 1984, for each fern cites its native world distribution and indicates its level of hardiness in Britain. Worth seeking out if you wish to check the hardiness of a particular fern. Not in print.

GENERAL

⁴Camus, J.M. (Ed.) 1991 **The History of British Pteridology 1891-1991** British Pteridological Society, Special Publication No.4 ISBN 0 9509806 3 3

A collection of scientific and horticultural articles by members of the British Pteridological Society.

^{2,3}Camus, J.M., A.C. Jermy & B.A. Thomas 1991 **The World of Ferns** Natural History Museum Publications, London ISBN 0 565 01 120 0

Published to celebrate the centenary of the British Pteridological Society, this is a delightful picture book illustrating, with explanatory text, the worldwide diversity of form and habitat, including gardens, of ferns and fern allies worldwide, and their fossil history. The photographs were all donated by members of the British Pteridological Society. Not in print.

^{3,4}Dyce, J.W. 1988 **Fern Names and their meanings** The British Pteridological Society, Special Publication No.2. ISBN 0 9509806 1 7

As its title suggests, this is a dictionary of the meaning of fern names, including varietal terms.

^{1*,2*}Jones, David L. 1987 **Encyclopaedia of Ferns** British Museum (Natural History), London ISBN 0 565 01 120 0

Covers a wide selection of ferns from across the world, wild and in cultivation, with brief notes on the cultivation of the plants described. Also includes chapters on the structure and biology of ferns, their cultural requirements, pests and diseases, propagation and hybridisation, ferns to grow and ferns for special purposes. Expensive but good value; descriptions are very brief, but there are ample small photographs. (Very detailed. Also described for the fern allies.) Not in print*

Large, Mark F. & John E. Braggins 2004 **Tree Ferns** Timber Press, Portland, Cambridge ISBN 0 88192 630 2

To quote the dust cover, 'the source of information on the living tree ferns'. This is a book for the botanist and the grower. It surveys all the families, genera and species, for the botanist offering up to date taxonomy and detailed descriptions, and for the grower, extensive cultivation information including propagation and diseases and pests. In print.

Moran, Robbin C. 2004 **A Natural History of Ferns** Timber Press, Portland, Cambridge ISBN 0 88192 667 1

A more delightful introduction to many aspects of the natural history of ferns one could not wish for. Delivered in a delightful, non-stuffy, non-condescending style, relating folk legends and human concerns where appropriate, topics as diverse as the life cycle, adaptation, fern geography and fossils are discussed. If only all student text books could be like this! In print.

Page, C.N. 1988 **A Natural History of Britain's Ferns** Collins, London. New Naturalist Series. ISBN 0 002 19382 8

The most comprehensive account of the ecology of Britain's ferns and allied plants in an accessible style. Not in print.