

Common Ferns of the Western Mountains, Valleys, and Coast Region

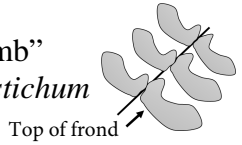


***Caution-This is a limited species key
NWPL**

1. Ferns with 2 types of fronds* (sterile and fertile) as separate leaf structures *Cryptogramma*

1. Ferns with only one type of frond, with or without fertile sori on the single frond type.

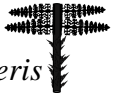
2. Ferns with once cut fronds, pinnae with a “thumb” shape at the base *Polystichum*



2. Ferns with twice or three times (thrice) cut fronds.*

3. Ferns that have twice cut fronds

4. Ferns with scaly bases on the greenish stem/frond *Dryopteris*

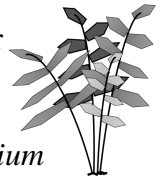


4. Ferns lacking scaly bases on the black stem bases *Woodwardia*

3. Ferns with three (thrice) cut fronds, base of fronds not scaly.

5. Fronds divided from the base forming a cluster of fronds.

6. Fronds wider than 6 inches and taller than 1 foot *Athyrium*



6. Fronds smaller than 6 inches wide and one foot tall *Cystopteris*

5. Fern fronds divided from a central erect stalk and/or from near the base but not forming clusters of fronds.

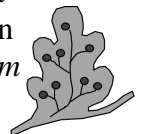
7. Fronds divided into circular or semi-circular shape with black, forked stalks. *Adiantum*



7. Fronds not divided into circular shape with a black stalk.

8. Fronds tall and coarse, sori located on margins of pinnae** *Pteridium*

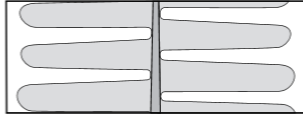
8. Fronds not tall and coarse, sori located on flat surface of pinnae *Gymnocarpium*



* Frond(s) is equal to saying leaf or leaves. The smaller leaf units on a frond are referred to as pinnae.

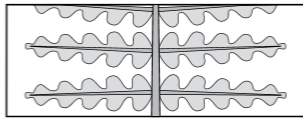
Leaflet Shapes

Once-Cut Fern



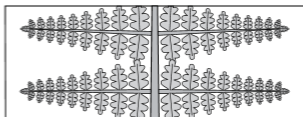
Simple
Leaflet

Twice-Cut Fern

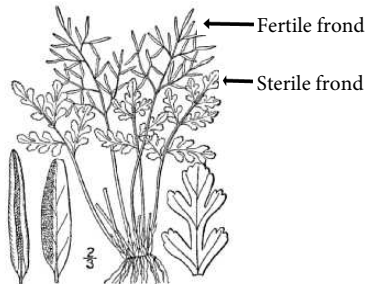
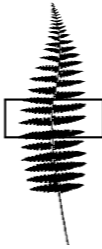


Leaflet with
Subleaflets
(pinnules)

Thrice-Cut Fern

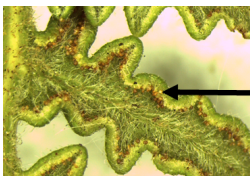


Subleaflets
(pinnules)
with lobes



USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions. 3 vols. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. Vol. 1: 32.

** Sori are clusters of sac like structures known as sporangia that contain spores, a reproductive unit of ferns.



Sori on
margins
of pinnae

Cryptogramma stelleri
Fragile Rockbrake (FACU)



Polystichum lonchitis
Northern Holly Fern (FACU)



Polystichum munitum
Pineland Sword Fern (FACU)



Dryopteris expansa
Spreading Wood Fern (FACW)



Cystopteris montana
Mountain Bladder Fern (FAC)



Cystopteris montana has a broadly triangular frond shape, created by three main branches of the frond.



C. montana

Cystopteris fragilis
Brittle Bladder Fern (FACU)



In this way it is distinguishable from *Cystopteris fragilis* which has a narrow, lanceolate triangular frond shape.



C. fragilis

Woodwardia fimbriata
Giant Chain Fern (FACW)



Athyrium americanum
American Alpine Lady Fern (FAC)



Athyrium cyclosorum
Western Lady Fern (FAC)



Adiantum aleuticum
Aleutian Maidenhair (FAC)



Pteridium aquilinum
Northern Bracken Fern (FACU)



Gymnocarpium dryopteris
Northern Oak Fern (FAC)



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- ³Carr, Gerald. 2013. Woodwardia Fimbriata. Digital image. Oregon Flora Image Project. University of Hawaii: Botany Department. Web. 2 Feb. 2016. <http://www.botany.hawaii.edu/faculty/carr/ofp/woo_fim.htm>.
- ⁴Oswald, Vernon H. Used with permission. Further use requires written permission from photographer.
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- ⁶Slichter, Paul. 2008. Oak Ferns of Mt. Adams: The Genus *Gymnocarpium*. Digital image. Flora & Fauna Northwest. Gresham High School. Web. <<http://science.halleyhosting.com/nature/>>.
- ⁷Robert H. Mohlenbrock, hosted by the USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / USDA NRCS. 1992. Western wetland flora: Field office guide to plant species. West Region, Sacramento.
- ⁸Pihlaviita, Kari. 2014. *Cystopteris montana*. Unedited. License link: <<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>>. Web. 2 Feb 2016. <<https://www.flickr.com/photos/42267636@N08/14659946195/in/photostream>>