

Dennstaedtiaceae

Although the family once included most of the ferns, it is now restricted to those ferns with their sori at or near the margins of the pinnae. Indusia are present and may be one of two types. The outer is a false indusium formed of the inrolled margins and the inner indusium, is the true indusium. Stipes and blades are pubescent, scales are usually absent. Rhizomes are long-trailing.

Key to genera

- A. Blades broadly triangular; sori continuous, along the margins; plant generally branched. *Pteridium*
- aa. Blades narrowly triangular, lanceolate or ovate; sori distinct, not joined; plant not branching. *Dennstaedtia*

***Dennstaedtia* Bernh.**

A tropical genus of about 70 species. The single Nova Scotian species follows.

***Dennstaedtia punctilobula* (Michx.) Moore**

Hay-scented Fern; dennstaedtie à lobules ponctués



Photo by Sean Blaney

Light green fronds arise from slender, creeping rhizomes. Stipes are pale brown and smooth, with minute pubescence covering the rachis and the lower blade surface. Plant forms large colonies of light-green deciduous fronds, bearing tiny round sori on lower surfaces, near the toothed margins. Cup-shaped indusia are present.

Easily detected by the sweet fragrance, reminiscent of



Photo by Sean Blaney

newly mown hay, owing to presence of coumarin.

Our only truly pubescent fern, producing spores from July to October.

A weedy fern that frequents dry locations, as on hillsides, roadsides and openings in forests. Said to be allopathic to some tree species. Sometimes referred to as a native invasive.

Very common throughout.

Found from NF to ON, south to GA and AR.

***Pteridium* Scop.**

Bracken

Circumboreal in distribution, it is probably Canada's most common fern species. Monotypic, the species has several varieties; only one reaches NS. Care must be taken not to confuse the croziers of this species with those of the edible Ostrich Fern.

***Pteridium aquilinum* (L.) Kuhn.**

Bracken; fougère-aigle



Photo by David Mazerolle

A tall, coarse fern, it arises from an extensive rhizome. Fronds are divided, often into three blades, each arising at right angles to the stipe. Sori are borne on lower surfaces of the pinnules, at or near the irregular margins. Undersurfaces of the blades may be sparsely pubescent. Not all pinnae are fertile. Eastern North America hosts var. *latiusculum* (Desv.) Underw.

Spores produced in summer.

Generally grows in barren soils as found after fire, barrens, open conifer woods and pastures.

Common throughout the province.

NF to MB, south to WY, TX and FL; AB; BC.