PLANT FACT SHEET

Acrostichum speciosum Willd.

GENUS *Acrostichum* **FAMILY** Pteridaceae

COMMON NAMES Mangrove fern, Wikakas fern

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Root, Rhizome - starch, Fronds, Leaves

The root is used for food. The starch is extracted and eaten.
Also the young curled shoots can be cooked and eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A coarse clumpy fern. It grows 1.5 m tall and has a creeping underground stem (rhizome) forming clumps. The stem is 5 cm across and 10 cm high. It is covered with brown scales. The leaves are erect fronds. The leaflets are on either side of the leaf stalk. The stalk of the frond is 50 cm long and 0.3-0.8 cm thick. The fronds are 1.5 m long. The leaflets are 20 cm long by 3.5 cm wide. They are somewhat thick and leathery. They are dull dark green. They taper to a narrow tip. The stalks for these leaflets are 1 cm long. The spores are produced on the upper fertile fronds. These are smaller than the sterile fronds. The spores cover the entire under surface as a dark brown mass. In Australia fertile fronds are produced in June.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in coastal flats and tidal areas. It is associated with mangroves. It can stand being flooded frequently by saltwater. This is the only fern found growing with mangroves. It occurs in Australia and Asia. It is very frost tender.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are very difficult to transplant. Plants can be grown from young spores.

NOTES

There are 3 Acrostichum species. Also put in the family family Adiantaceae.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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