PLANT FACT SHEET

Cyathea contaminans (Wallich ex Hooker) Copeland

GENUS *Cyathea* **FAMILY** Cyatheaceae

COMMON NAMES Blue tree fern

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Fronds, Pith

The young fronds are cooked and eaten with meat.
The young pith is cut up and steamed with rice and eaten when tree ferns are being harvested for buildings.

CAUTION Leaves of Cyathea ferns are known to contain chemicals called flavenoid glycosides.

DESCRIPTION

A tree fern. It has erect trunks 5-8 m tall. The trunks can be 20 m tall. The trunks are 12-15 cm thick. It has many roots. These make the base thick. The fronds are 2-3.5 m long and have scales on all surfaces. The fronds are divided 2 or 3 times. The fronds have many side leaflets. These are 50-75 cm long. The secondary leaflets are 8-12 mm long. The spore bodies are on the under surface of the fronds. They are near the rib. The covering over these falls off early. The old fronds fall off.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. They require abundant moisture and do best in part shade. They grow in open forest often near streams. It mostly grows between 200-1600 m. They are frost tender.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

These ferns mostly grow naturally. They are preserved when bush is being cleared for gardens. They can easily be raised from spores on the back of fronds. They can be transplanted if some roots are included and the fronds are trimmed.

NOTES

There are about 800 Cyathea species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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