PLANT FACT SHEET

Ceratopteris thalictroides (L.) Brongniart

GENUS *Ceratopteris* **FAMILY** Pteridaceae

COMMON NAMES Swamp fern, Water hornfern, Water sprite

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Fronds, Vegetable

The plant is edible. It can be used raw or cooked. The young fronds are eaten in stir-fries.
The young uncurled fronds can be eaten raw.

DESCRIPTION

A fern which grows in water. It is an annual plant. It grows 10-35 cm tall. It has soft upright stalks with light green soft fronds. The rhizome is short and sticks up. There are thin, clear, scales on the rhizome. The leaves vary from simple leaves, to leaves which are divided 3 times. The stem is anchored in mud. It grows as tufted clumps. Leaves are like carrot tops. The stem of the frond is spongy and air filled. It can grow under the water or be free floating. It produces small plants on the fronds. The fertile fronds which produce the spores, are longer and more finely divided, than the other fronds. They are more stiff and erect and turn brown when mature. The plant only lasts a few months.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in still or slow flowing fresh water in the tropics. It occurs in swamps up to 1300 m altitude in Papua New Guinea, but it is mostly below 500 m. It can float. It is found in all tropical countries. It is very frost tender. They occur throughout the Philippines near sea level on mud and are able to thrive in shallow water. It grows well in acidic soil (pH 5-6.5) and in shady places. It needs temperatures above 18°C. It grows in wetlands.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It is grown as an aquarium plant. Small pieces of plant will root in mud. Spores can also grow.

NOTES

There are 3-4 Ceratopteris species. They are also put in the family Ceratopteridaceae and Parkeriaceae.
It grows throughout the lowland tropic in estuaries and swamps.

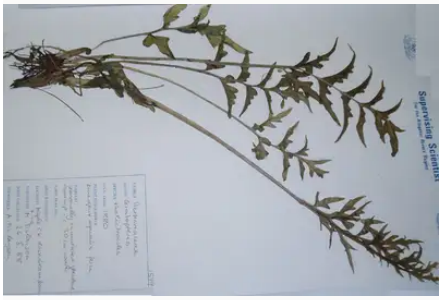
PICTURES



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