PLANT FACT SHEET

# *Asplenium nidus* L.

**GENUS** *Asplenium* **FAMILY** Aspleniaceae

**COMMON NAMES** Bird's Nest Fern, Crows Nest fern

## EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

**Edible parts:** Leaves, Fronds

In the Caroline Islands and Marshall Islands young leaves are eaten. They are used for soup. Also in India. They are an emergency food in famines in China.

## DESCRIPTION

An evergreen fern. It grows to 1.5 m high and spreads 3 m across. It can grow by feeding on other plants. It forms nest like bowls on the upper side of branches. The underground thickened horizontal stem is dark brown and short. It is covered with blackish scales. The roots are hairy. The fronds grow out from a central point so that the fern forms rounded tussocks. The fronds are simple and entire and sword shape. The fronds can be 2 m long and up to 20 cm wide. They are dark or yellowish green. They have a raised, bluntly rounded mid vein.

## HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It grows in well drained moist soils. It prefers a well protected partly shaded position but not heavy shade. It is drought and frost tender. It occurs on many atolls. It suits hardiness zones 10-12. Mt Cootha Botanical Gardens. In Brisbane Botanical Garden as Asplenium antiquum.

## PRODUCTION

### Cultivation

Plants can be grown from spores. It can also be grown from rhizome cuttings.

## NOTES

There are over 600-700 Asplenium ferns. They are mostly tropical and subtropical.

## PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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