

ferns

The life cycle of a fern is an interesting one and involves two separate plants. Ferns reproduce by means of spores which are borne in brownish clusters on the undersides of the leaflets of fertile ferns. The ripe spore clusters dry and spring open, dispersing thousands of spores. These spores develop into tiny intermediate plants called gametophytes. In this phase sexual reproduction occurs. The fertilized egg then develops into a new fern.

I. Fronds divided into simple leaflets

A. Leaflets toothed on the edges Sword fern
 B. Leaflets smooth on the edges

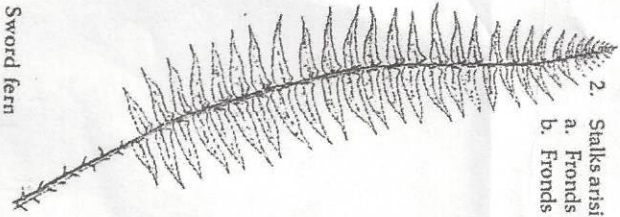
1. Grows on tree trunks, stumps, sometimes rocks Licorice fern
2. Grows on moist forest floor Deer fern

II. Fronds divided into compound leaflets

A. Fern stalk shiny black Maidenhair fern
 B. Fern stalk not shiny black

1. Stalks arising in clusters and covered with loose scales Lady fern
 - a. Fronds widest at the middle Spreading wood fern
 - b. Fronds widest at the base.....

2. Stalks arising singly, lacking loose scales
 - a. Fronds delicate, horizontal, 1' tall or less Oak fern
 - b. Fronds robust, usually 1-4' tall Bracken fern



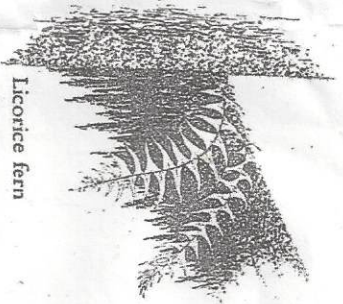
Sword fern



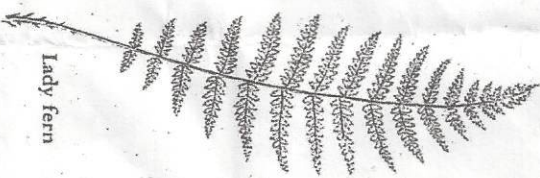
Oak fern



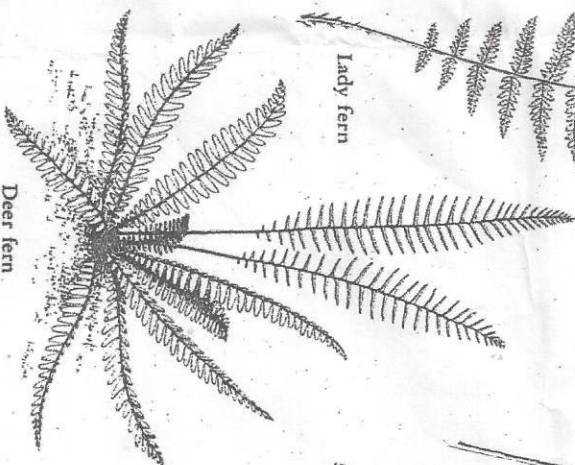
Spreading wood fern



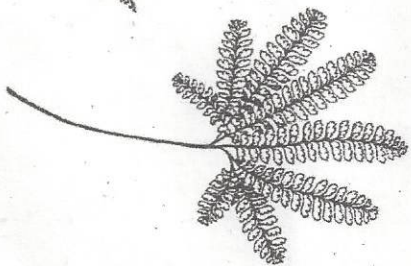
Licorice fern



Lady fern



Deer fern



Bracken fern

Maidenhair fern