

Common Polypody

Polypodium vulgare

Plants · Evergreen fern



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A small evergreen fern with leathery, once-divided fronds of blunt, parallel-sided lobes, borne singly along a creeping scaly rhizome rather than in a rosette. Common polypody grows on old walls, rocks, banks and — distinctively — along the mossy branches and trunks of trees in the damp woods around Dumfries.

BEHAVIOUR

Growing on a tree makes it an epiphyte, taking nothing from the host and living on the moisture and debris trapped in bark and moss. That habit is characteristic of the humid Atlantic oakwoods of the west, where the air is damp enough to support it. The round orange spore clusters on the frond underside are conspicuous and need no protective covering.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Polypodies (Polypodiaceae)
FROND	10–40 cm, once-divided
STATUS	Native; common on walls, rocks and tree branches