

Male Fern

Dryopteris filix-mas

Plants · Deciduous fern · fronds Apr–Nov



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A large, robust fern forming a neat shuttlecock of arching, twice-divided fronds with a stout scaly stalk. It is coarser and less finely cut than lady fern, and its stalk scales are pale brown. Male fern is one of the commonest ferns around Dumfries, in woodland, on shaded banks, along lanes and in gardens and old walls.

BEHAVIOUR

The names are purely a matter of appearance: ferns have no male and female plants, and the 'male' fern was so called simply because it is coarser and more robust than the delicate lady fern. Spores are borne in kidney-shaped clusters on the frond undersides. The fronds die back after hard frost but the crown persists, throwing up new croziers that unfurl in spring.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Wood ferns (Dryopteridaceae)
FROND	50–120 cm, twice-divided
STATUS	Native; abundant in woodland and shaded ground

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