

CYATHEACEAE

Alsophila spinulosa (Wall. ex Hook.) R.M. Tryon [= *Cyathea spinulosa* Wall. ex Hook.; *Alsophila decipiens* J. Scott ex Bedd.; *Hemitelia decipiens* J. Scott; *Amphicosmia decipiens* (J. Scott ex Bedd.) Bedd.; *Cyathea decipiens* Clarke & Baker]



Alsophila spinulosa (Wall. ex Hook.)
R.M. Tryon
Photo Courtesy: B.S. Kholia

Common English name : Tree fern.

Distribution : INDIA: Uttarakhand, West Bengal (Darjeeling), Sikkim, Assam, Meghalaya, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Nicobar Islands; JAPAN; CHINA; TAIWAN; NEPAL; BHUTAN; MYANMAR; THAILAND; VIETNAM and PHILIPPINES.

Habitat : Along water channels.

Population status / Cause for RET : Vulnerable. Habitat alteration and change in land use are some causes of threat.

Description : Tree fern, 3-10 m tall with a compact and beautiful crown; trunks covered with thick, black fibres. Stipes 30-40 cm long, dark black to bluish-black or stramineous brown, spinulose; spines 2-5 mm long; scales 10-20 × 1-2 mm, glossy brown, middle and margin pale, fragile; rachis bearing short spines, scales flat scattered on stipes, rachis and costae glabrous on lower surface. Mature pinnules 8-10 × 1.5-2.5 cm, upper surface of lamina dark green, lower light green, thin, glaucous; segments lobed almost up to costa; costules crenate-serrate, 3-5 mm apart; veins 10-24 pairs, simple, forked or pinnate. Sori round, copious, with a rudimentary papery indusia when young; indusium thin, covering whole sori; basal part of indusium persistent in old sori, hairs absent on lower surface of costae and costules; few flat whitish scales present.