

### ***Mangrove Fern (Achrostichum speciosum)***

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Some of the best representations of the Mangrove Fern in South East Queensland are at the Wetlands Sanctuary where it is found in a range of situations. It lives in the Casuarina Forest, amongst the mangroves (where no other fern grows terrestrially), but the best specimens are in the Melaleuca Forest where it has some protection from the sun and drying conditions, and perhaps benefits from additional fresh water.

It grows in large clumps with fronds stretching up to two metres in length. It is a real fern which is obvious when the leaflets at the ends of fertile fronds are heavily in spore. The range is coastal Northern Territory and the eastern coast of Queensland, extending into New South Wales.

It is unexpectedly valuable to our wildlife in the sanctuary. The Swamp Rat domiciles and feeds amongst the plants and builds runways under the Casuarina needles on the forest floor. The Mountain Brushtail is fond of the young shoots, while Rufous Fantail, Eastern Whipbird, Brown Thornbill, White-browed Scrubwren, and Large-billed Scrubwren flit between the fronds finding insects and protection.

