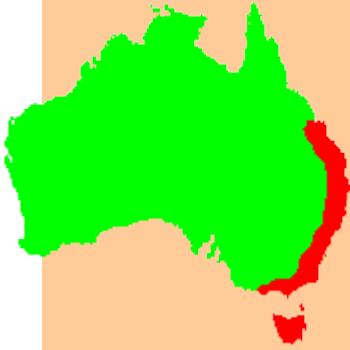


Cyathea australis



Family:	Cyatheaceae
Distribution:	Wet forests and rainforests of all eastern states.
Common Name:	Rough tree fern
Derivation of Name:	<i>Cyathea</i>from Greek, <i>cyathos</i> , a cup, referring to the shape of the sori (clusters that contain the spore bearing structures). <i>australis</i>southern, referring to the distribution of the species.
Conservation Status:	Not considered to be at risk in the wild.

General Description:

Cyathea is a well known genus of tree ferns. There are about 800 species worldwide with around 15 native to Australia.



Cyathea australis

Photo: Fred Johnston

Cyathea australis is probably the most common tree fern encountered, as it occurs widely from coastal areas to the mountains. Old specimens can have trunks up to 10 metres high. The radiating fronds are finely divided and may be up to 4.5 metres long. The term "rough tree fern" refers to rough protuberances on the stipes (the stalk of the fronds) - this is one feature that distinguishes *C. australis* from another common tree fern, *Dicksonia antarctica* (smooth tree fern).

Rough tree fern is a hardy and very popular fern in cultivation. It prefers a semi shaded position but can be grown in full sun if its roots are kept moist. It will tolerate moderate frost although young fronds may be burnt. It will respond favourably to regular applications of general purpose fertilizers.

Propagation is carried out from spores (see "Australian Plants online" [March 1999](#) issue for simple propagation methods).

Note: Large tree ferns are often sold by nurseries as trunks sawn off at the base. These are *Dicksonia antarctica* and they quickly form roots from the base when planted. *Cyathea australis* cannot be treated in the same way and will not grow from sawn off sections.