

# Royal fern

*Osmunda regalis*

## Family

Osmundaceae (royal fern)

## Where is it originally from?

Europe, West Asia, India, Africa, America.

## What does it look like?

Terrestrial, deciduous fern with short, woody trunk (<1.5 m tall, <1+ m diameter). covered in persistent stalk bases. Yellow-brown leaf stalks have ear-like lobes at base and large, tough, leathery, yellow-green fronds (30-300 x 20-75 cm) divided twice with primary leaflets (pinnae) (up to 30 cm long) and secondary leaflets (20-70 x 8-18 mm), in up to 15 pairs. Inner fronds often have fertile secondary pinnae at their ends (each 30 x 4 mm), densely covered with clusters of light brown spore bodies.

## Why is it weedy?

Tolerates frost, wet, moderate shade, poor and acidic soils.

## How does it spread?

Spores are widely distributed by wind.

## What damage does it do?

One of the very few weeds of bogs, royal fern competes with native species for space in specialised niches.

## Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Wetlands, swamps, streamsides, and damp bare (especially acidic) land.

## What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Dig out (all year round). Dry the rootstock and mulch.
2. Spray (spring-summer): metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (3g/10L).

## What can I do to stop it coming back?

Bared areas occasionally re-establish. Check for new plants annually.



[www.weedbusters.org.nz](http://www.weedbusters.org.nz)



Photo: Carolyn Lewis



Photo: Carolyn Lewis



Photo: Carolyn Lewis