

September Mini Project

Ferns

SOME FERN FACTS

Ferns are a group of ancient plants which have been around for 340 million years.

There are about 12,000 species worldwide.

Ferns do not have flowers or seeds.

Instead ferns produce spores on the underside of the leaves. Fern leaves are known as fronds.

When the spores are ripe they are released and are carried on the wind.

If they land in a suitable moist place, the spores grow into tiny plants no bigger than your thumbnail.

Fertilisation takes place here if male swimmers can reach the female bits of another plant.

As a result a new adult plant grows. Most ferns uncoil their leaves in spring and produce spores in summer.



Common Polypody (*Polypodium vulgare*)

During September ferns will be maturing and releasing their spores.

This is a good time to have a good look at the ferns in your area. The spores are found on the back of the fronds of mature plants. The distribution of spores on the frond can give a clue to the species. The photo below shows the spores on Common Polypody which start off lime green and go through yellow to brown.



Have a go at identifying some of the ferns you find in your area. You will need a good key and 'The Fern Guide' by James Merryweather is a good first guide. Available from the FSC website. Or get one from the library.

For more fern fun come along to our **Fern Identification** session on **Sunday 8th October** when Steve Hindle will be teaching us how to identify some of our local ferns.

You can bring along a specimen if you want to identify it but make sure you bring the whole frond.

Send your photos to rfnspublicity@gmail.com