

IX. NOTE ON THE PLAN FOR THE  
PTERIDOPHYTE SERIES OF FLORA MALESIANA

Ferns are by far the largest division of vascular cryptogams, and, for purposes of publication of Flora Malesiana, they will have to be subdivided in a series of parts. This necessarily raises the problem of taxonomic subdivision of ferns into families or other major taxonomic units, a matter on which there is at present no general agreement among pteridologists, except that the more primitive families are generally recognized as distinct groups. As regards the majority of ferns therefore no formal arrangement into families will be attempted.

There is however a fairly general agreement that certain groups of genera (e.g. the Davallia group) are natural groups. It is the intention to arrange the genera of ferns in such groups, and to publish the group-revisions in such sequence as may be most practicable. The author of the revision of any particular group must naturally decide the limits he will recognize for the group; and as the whole work will be by more than one author, some differences of opinion as to the delimitations of groups are probably unavoidable. It is believed that such differences of opinion will not be

great, and if they occur their existence will be indicated by cross-references.

As a beginning, the genera of ferns have been arranged in a provisional way into groups, and a set of tentative keys to all genera have been prepared; the list of genera, and the keys, are to be published with the first part of the series on Pteridophytes. It is hoped that the series will terminate with a revised conspectus of the groups, and a new set of keys, based on the fuller knowledge which will be available when the work is complete.

Type specimens of all species will be cited, and their location. So far as possible also, type species of genera will be specified; but in the case of some genera which have a considerable distribution outside of our region it may not be possible to decide what are the most appropriate type species.

It is hoped that the treatment of ferns in Flora Malesiana will be a major contribution to the understanding of ferns as a whole, and therefore to a more satisfactory classification than is at present available. But such a new classification will need to be based on the ferns of the whole world, not of one region only.

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