

Threatened species of the Northern Territory

Venus-hair fern

Adiantum capillus-veneris

Conservation status

Australia: Not Listed

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Northern Territory: Vulnerable

Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976

Description

This species is a rock-dwelling fern. Its fronds/leaves are tufted, to 36 cm long. The delicate and membranous leaf blade is 2-3-pinnate, triangular 5-20 cm long x 4-15 cm wide. There are 1-10 spore clusters (sori) along margins

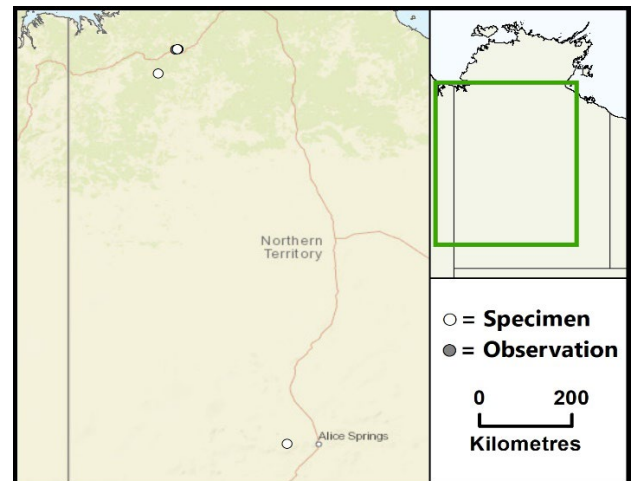


Credit: M. Amrstrong

Distribution

The Venus-hair fern occurs in all Australian states and territories except Tasmania and the ACT, but is nowhere common¹. It also occurs overseas. In the NT, it has a disjunct distribution, occurring at Jasper Gorge (where last collected in 1974) and Mount Wilson Creek in or near Gregory National Park, and at one location (Hugh Gorge) in the West MacDonnell Ranges².

NT conservation reserves where reported: Gregory National Park, West MacDonnell National Park.



Caption: Known occurrences of the Venus-hair Fern in the NT (nrmmaps.nt.gov.au)

Ecology and life-history

In Australia, this species usually grows on limestone or sandstone rock, or on alkaline soils. At the Chewings Range (Hugh Gorge) site, it grows in quartzite rock crevices in deep sheltered gorges where the roots have access to permanent streams or seepage³.

Threatening processes

The NT population is probably secure in the short term (barring unforeseen events such as the drying up of springs or disease). In the longer term, this species may be threatened by global climate change.

Conservation objectives and management

Attempts should be made to re-locate the Jasper Gorge population. Selected populations should be monitored to track trends in habitat condition and threat levels.

References

- ¹ Bostock, P.D. 1998. Adiantaceae. *Flora of Australia* 48, 248-286.
- ² Short, P., Dixon, D., and Osterkamp Madsen, M. 2003. A review of ferns and fern allies of the Northern Territory. *The Beagle* 19, 7-80.
- ³ White, M., Albrecht, D., Duguid, A., Latz, P., and Hamilton, M. 2000. *Plant species and sites of botanical significance in the southern bioregions of the Northern Territory. Volume 1: significant vascular plants*. A report to the Australian Heritage Commission. (Arid Lands Environment Centre, Alice Springs.).