
CHEIROPLEURIACEAE
(J.E. Laferrière, Providence, USA)


Terrestrial or epilithic herb. Rhizome woody, creeping or subscandent, protostelic, lacking scales, covered with soft, uniseriate, pale brown, multicellular hairs. Fronds dimorphous. Petioles glabrous except at base, not articulated to rhizome. Sterile fronds often simple but typically 2(−4)-lobed, entire and lobed blades often appearing on the same plant, lamina glabrous, coriaceous; the lobes (if present) acuminate with a broad sinus between; base broadly rounded or sometimes obtuse or acute; margins entire, sometimes slightly revolute; main veins dichotomous, smaller veins reticulate. Fertile fronds simple, narrow, linear to narrowly lanceolate, gradually tapering at both ends; upper surface glabrous; lower surface wholly covered with sporangia and simple club-shaped paraphyses except along the 1–3 main veins and a narrow strip along the margin. Sporangia long-stalked, annulus almost vertical, extending most of the way round the sporangium. Spores creamy-white to pale brown.

One genus with one species.

TAXONOMY

The family has often been treated as part of the Polypodiaceae. The unique sporangial structure, however, suggests a more distant relationship. See K.A. Wilson, Contr. Gray Herb. 185 (1959) 97–127.

CHEIROPLEURIA


— Type species: Cheiropleuria bicuspis (Blume) C. Presl.

Characters of the family. One species.

Cheiropleuria bicuspis (Blume) C. Presl


Rhizome 4–10 mm in diam.; hairs up to 1 cm long. Fronds extremely variable in proportions. Sterile fronds 20–60 cm long, lamina up to 21 by 16(−30) cm. Fertile fronds usually longer than sterile ones, up to 52 cm long, lamina (5–)10–12(−25) mm wide. Petioles 20–50 cm long. — Fig. 1.

Distribution — Throughout Malesia to southern Japan, southern China, Vietnam and Thailand.

Habitat — Usually on steep or rocky, generally rather dry soil in hills and mountains. Altitude 600–1500 m.

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Taxonomy — The leaves of this species are highly variable, with entire and lobed leaves sometimes appearing on the same plant. For this reason, var. integrifolia is not recognized here as a separate taxon.

Fig. 1. *Cheiropleuria biscuspis* (Blume) C. Presl. Habit with sterile and fertile leaves; × 0.5.