

*Dryopteris marginalis*

[Synonyms : *Aspidium marginale*, *Nephrodium marginale*, *Polypodium marginale*]

**ASPIDIUM** is a deciduous fern with lance-shaped, deep green fronds.

It is also known as Evergreen wood fern, Leatherwood fern, Male fern, Marginal fern, Marginal buckler fern, Marginal-fruited shield fern, Marginal shield fern, Marginal woodfern, Prickly toothed shield fern, Sweet American aspidium, and Wood fern.

Warning – large doses can cause delirium, nausea, vomiting, blindness and death (from cardiac and respiratory failure). It must only be used under the supervision of a qualified practitioner. It must not be taken internally if pregnant or suffering from heart disorders. In Britain this is classified as a pharmacy medicine only available through a registered pharmacist. It is poisonous for animals.

*Marginalis* is derived from Latin *marginis* (edge, border) meaning ‘edged’.

Alaskan Inuits have eaten the roots cooked on hot stones.

The North American Cherokee Indians used the fern to ease toothache. In addition the tribe used a root infusion not only when it was necessary to cause vomiting but also as a means of easing rheumatism.

Medicinally, European herbalists have turned to aspidium in the past as they did male fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*). Under the supervision of a qualified practitioner the plant can still be used today to kill and expel intestinal tapeworms. There are however other related ferns which are considered to be more effective now. Apart from tapeworms the old herbalists also recommended the root as a remedy for rickets in children and as an ointment for healing wounds.