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Osmunda cinnamomea

[Synonyms : *Anemia bipinnata*, *Osmunda bipinnata*, *Osmunda cinnamomea* var. *fokienense*, *Osmunda cinnamomea frondosa*, *Osmunda cinnamomea* var. *imbricata*, *Osmunda imbricata*, *Osmundastrum cinnamomeum*, *Osmundastrum cinnamomeum* var. *fokiense*, *Struthiopteris cinnamomea*]

CINNAMON FERN is a deciduous fern. Native to North America, South America and eastern Asia, it has cinnamon brown fronds.

It is also known as Buckhorn, Cinnamon-colored fern, and Fiddleheads.

Cinnamomea means ‘cinnamon-coloured or pale reddish-brown like cinnamon’.

Abnaki North American Indians ate the white stem bases like a snack whereas the Menominee tribe considered young fronds and frond tips to be an especial delicacy. They usually made them into a soup (after the ants had been removed with an hour’s simmering) which was said to taste like wild rice (*Zizania aquatica*).

As deer were also believed to have a particular liking for these shoots Indian hunters were supposed to eat only cinnamon fern so that their own scent would not disturb the prey.

Cinnamon fern was an ingredient in an Iroquois veterinary medicine used to help calving cows.

Some of the North American tribes recognized the fern as a source of medicine. The Iroquois took it to ease colds (and also as a tonic), and the Cherokee Indians used it to treat fever.

Both the Menominee and Iroquois tribes turned to it for treating some female ailments, and the Cherokee and Iroquois chose it as a remedy for rheumatism. It was applied externally by the latter in the treatment of venereal disease, and the Cherokee used the fern in remedies for snake bites.

Authorities recall that the fern’s fibrous black roots were a popular medium for cultivating orchids in North America after the Second World War and this is copied widely today.

The Japanese use the hairs around young fronds and wool (as from royal fern, *Osmunda regalis*, too) to make waterproof material for raincoats.