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Platycerium bifurcatum

[Synonyms : *Acrostichum bifurcatum*, *Platycerium alcicorne*]

ELK’S-HORN FERN is an evergreen fern-like airplant (which grows independently upon another plant). Native to Australia, the Pacific and New Zealand, it has antler-like green fronds.

It is also known as Antelope ears, Common stag’s-horn fern, *Parožnatka vidličnatá* (Czech), and Stag’s-horn fern.

Elk’s-horn fern is a protected species in the northern Australian rainforests.

Bifurcatum is derived from Latin *bi-* (two) and *furcati-* (forked) meaning ‘forked into two’ components with reference to the fern’s fronds.

This fern was found by an Englishman of reputed fiery temper. George Caley (1770-1829) had been a gardener at the Chelsea Physic Garden in England and was commissioned by the English botanist, Sir Joseph Banks (1744-1820), to collect new plants and send them back to Britain. He sailed out to Australia in 1800 and collected in the Hunter River area of New South Wales.

Medicinally, on the Indonesian island of Java, the leaves have been applied to swellings.