

| BRITISH MALE FERNS | <i>Dryopteris oreades</i> | <i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i> | <i>Dryopteris affinis</i> subsp. <i>affinis</i> | <i>Dryopteris affinis</i> subsp. <i>borreri</i> | <i>Dryopteris affinis</i> subsp. <i>cambrensis</i> |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|
| DARK PATCH <i>Brown-purple colouration beneath frond where costa joins rachis.</i> | Absent. Sometimes a 'smudge' on older plants or late in season. Rarely visible from above. | Absent. Frequently <u>present</u> on older plants or late in season. Rarely visible from above. | Present. Usually also visible from above. Often continuous with rachis coloration. | Present. Usually also visible from above. Rarely continuous with rachis coloration. | Present. Usually also visible from above. Sometimes continuous with rachis coloration. |
| FRONDS <i>Length when sori present</i> | 40-50(-80) cm | 40-150 cm | 40-150(-200) cm | 40-150(-200) cm | 40-150(-200) cm |
| PINNAE <i>Rotation from plane of frond</i> <i>Pinnae adjacent to rachis</i> | Zero or slight rotation Slightly longer than next pair | Zero to rotation of <60° Up to 2/3 longer than next pair | Zero or slight rotation Slightly longer than next pair | Zero or slight rotation Slightly longer than next pair | Zero to rotation of <90° Up to 2/3 longer than next pair |
| PINNULES | | | | | |
| <i>Outline</i> | Oblong, parallel-sided | ± Lanceolate, tapering | Oblong, parallel-sided, tapering in very large plants | Oblong, parallel-sided, tapering in large plants | Oblong, parallel-sided, tapering in large plants |
| <i>Habit</i> | Irreg. twisted, ± concave, 'crisped' | ± Flat (margin slightly recurved) | ± Flat (margin slightly recurved) | ± Flat (margin slightly recurved) | ± Flat (margin slightly recurved) |
| <i>Margin</i> | ± Entire (as <i>D. f-m</i> in large plants) | With deep, acute lobes | ± Entire | ± Entire | Usually with shallow teeth |
| <i>Apex shape</i> | Rounded | Usually pointed | Rounded (occasionally square) | Square; some or many round or pointed on large plants | Usually pointed, occasionally rounded |
| <i>Apical teeth</i> (lens) | Inconspicuous, blunt | Conspicuous, broad, pointed | Blunt, usually inconspicuous | Conspicuous, narrow, acute | Conspicuous, blunt |
| <i>Attachment of lowest two pinnules on frond, next to rachis</i> | Not relevant | Not relevant | Adnate: partly or wholly attached to costa along one side | Stalked: not or barely attached to costa | Not relevant |
| SORI | | | | | |
| <i>Distribution</i> | Mostly confined to half or less of pinnule surface along costa | Usually covering at least two thirds of pinnule | Usually covering at least two thirds of pinnule | Usually covering at least two thirds of pinnule | Usually covering at least two thirds of pinnule |
| INDUSIA | | | | | |
| <i>Thickness</i> (lens) | Thick | Very thin | Very thick | Thin | Thick, thin at margin |
| <i>Early Season</i> (lens) | Tucked under sporangia | At least part of margin spreading and appressed to pinnule surface | Tucked under sporangia | Tucked under sporangia | Tucked under sporangia |
| <i>Mid Season</i> (lens) | Lift irregularly, often with circumferential constriction ('mob-cap') | Shrivel irregularly and roll up | Too thick to lift or shrivel, therefore split radially | Shrivel & roll into narrow inverted cone ('chanterelle') | Crinkle around margin ('pie-crust') variously lift, roll and split |
| <i>Late Season</i> (lens) | Not shed. | Shed as spores released. | Not shed. | Mostly shed. | Some shed. |
| <i>Winter</i> (lens) | Most retained on old fronds | Few retained on old fronds | Most retained on old fronds | Few retained on old fronds | Many retained on old fronds |
| <i>Glands</i> (microscope) | Few & minute, at margin | Absent | Absent | Absent | Absent |
| "JIZZ" FACTORS | ** ! CAUTION ! ** | SUBJECTIVE | CHARACTERS | USE WITH | DISCRETION |
| HABITAT | Upland Rocks and scree | Wayside, woodland, gardens etc. | Mostly open situations | Mostly woodland | Open & woodland |
| STIPE & RACHIS | | | | | |
| <i>Thickness</i> slender 1-5 stout | 3 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 4 |
| <i>Erectness</i> arching 1-5 erect | 5 | <i>shade</i> 2-5 <i>open</i> | 5 | <i>shade</i> 2-4 <i>open</i> | <i>shade</i> 3-5 <i>open</i> |
| <i>Scale Colour</i> | Pale brown/beige | Pale brown/beige | Golden/Red-brown | Pale brown/beige/black-brown | Cinnamon/Metallic golden |
| <i>Scale Density</i> sparse 1-5 dense | 2-3 | 1-2 | 5 | 2-4 | 3-5 |
| FROND APPEARANCE | | | | | |
| <i>Colour Early Season</i> | Grey-green | Grey-green | Yellow or golden-green | Yellowish-green | Yellow-green |
| <i>Colour Mid Season</i> | Greyish/yellowish mid-green | Mid to dark-green | Yellow-green (<i>in open</i>) Mid-green (<i>in shade</i>) | Greyish mid-green Darker green in shade | Greyish/yellowish mid-green Dark green (<i>shade</i>) |
| <i>Surface Texture</i> | | | | | |
| <i>'Finish'</i> dull 1-5 glossy | 1-2 | 2-3 | 4-5 | 1-2 | 3-4(-5) |
| <i>'Feel'</i> soft 1-5 leathery | 2-3(4) | 2-3 | 5 | 1-2(-4 <i>in open</i>) | 3-4(-5) |
| <i>Winter green</i> brown 1-5 green | 1 | 1 | 4-5 | 2-3 | 3-5 |