

PAKU



Scientific Name: *Diplazium esculentum* (Retz.)
Swartz, J. Bot. (Schrad.)
Common Name: Edible fern
Local Name: Paku

BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

The rootstocks are stout. The trunk is erect, woody, thickened, and bears many black wiry roots. The tip is clothed with brown, linear scales. The stalks are 20-50 cm long, are green and somewhat smooth. The fronds are 2 or 3 pinnate, 50-80 cm long, and about half as wide as long. The pinnules are broad ovate, 2-3 cm long and rather coarsely toothed. The clusters of spore on the side of the veins or veinlets.

ADAPTABILITY AND AVAILABILITY

Paku is a plant distinct to gravel bars and banks of swift streams. It is widely distributed in the Philippines.

USES/IMPORTANCE

The young fronds of this fern are much desired and are eaten either raw or cooked. They are used as a leafy vegetable or as an ingredient of stews; they are even pickled. The young fiddle heads are eaten as salad. The roots are used as growing base for orchids.

NUTRIENT VALUE

Fresh paku per one hundred grams edible portion, contain water (90 g), protein (3.1 g), fat (0.3 g), carbohydrates (3.9 g), fiber (1.2 g), ash (1.3 g), P (115 mg), ca (22 mg), and Fe (1.2 mg).

PROPAGATION

Paku grows easily from spores. Vegetative propagation is possible through runners or rhizomes. It needs wet conditions and shade during planting.

CULTURAL PRACTICES

Diplazium ferns are best grown in wet soils and shady conditions. Use of compost and other organic fertilizer can growth.

PEST AND DISEASE MANAGEMENT

There are no known serious diseases or pests of pako.

HARVESTING

When grown from spores, two-three year-old Diplazium plants can be harvested. When grown from runners, on the one hand, pako harvesting might start after six months.

POSTHARVEST HANDLING

Leave air-dried in the shade, compared to leaves dried artificially, retain better quality after rehydration for use as a vegetable.

FOOD PREPARATION

Pako can be eaten as salad or cooked with egg, meat or seafood.

PROSPECTS/OPPORTUNITIES

Diplazium ferns are considered the most important fern variety for human consumption. Further research is needed to culture this species