

Dryopteris Adans. WOOD FERN

Dryopteris arguta (Kaulf.) Maxon, COASTAL WOOD FERN, MARGINAL WOOD FERN.

Perennial herb, evergreen, rhizomatous, fibrous-rooted, \pm rosetted, typically < 60 cm tall; shoots with several or more arching or spreading leaves, with stalked glandular hairs; fiddleheads 6–15 mm diameter, densely covered with scales, the scales narrowly triangular to ovate, 8–9(–12) mm long, transparent light brown, acute to acuminate at tip, deciduous, replaced by hairlike scales near tip, with scattered, minute glandular hairs, only slightly aromatic; rhizomes horizontal (suberect) and creeping, shallow (not below 100 mm), to 300+ mm long, sometimes short-branched, 10–20 mm thick but surface obscured by numerous persistent petiole bases, in \times -section with hard cortex pale green near tip to pale creamy yellow further away and having a ring of ca. 7 vascular bundles; persistent petiole bases ascending, remaining alive without blade, 5–50 mm long, each vascular bundle small with light tan xylem surrounded by darker tan phloem; adventitious roots long, thin, brown, wiry, from rhizome and petiole bases. **Leaves (fronds):** helically alternate, odd-2-pinnately compound basally to 1-pinnate above blade midpoint and pinnately dissected approaching tips of primary and secondary divisions, typically with > 30 primary leaflets, petiolate, 300–900 mm long; petiole (stipe) channeled approaching blade, 120–390 mm long (typically < 1/2 blade length), scaly (especially below midpoint), in \times -section with 3–5 small and widely spaced vascular bundles arranged in an arc, the vascular bundles dark purple on margins and white centrally, typically 2 upper vascular bundles larger than others; blade lanceolate to ovate-lanceolate in outline, 250–650 \times (80–)120–280 mm; rachis narrowly channeled, scaly, with tiny, stalked glandular hairs; petiolules of primary leaflets to 3 mm long; primary leaflets alternate or often subopposite below midblade, narrowly lanceolate to oblong, to 150 \times 40 mm long, the longest near the base and with > 20 pairs of secondary leaflets, decreasing upward, angled 60–80° from rachis, widely spaced below midpoint of rachis; secondary axis narrowly channeled like primary axis, sparsely scaly, with stalked glandular hairs along upper side; secondary leaflets (pinnules) alternate or opposite on same primary leaflet, oblong to lanceolate, the larger pinnules 10–20 \times 4–6 mm reduced upward, thin, sessile, narrowly to broadly attached to and decurrent along axis, short-serrate or 2-serrate (teeth on principal teeth) and lobed or not on margins, the teeth sharply pointed, oblique at tip, venation forked from midvein with terminal vein ending in each fine tooth, dull green, lower surface with scattered glandular hairs. **Sori:** arranged in 2 rows on lower surface with 7–11 sori per row on well-developed pinnules (sometimes extra sori at base of pinnule), each row midway between midvein and margin and opposite pinnule lobes, \pm deciduous after spores released; indusium roundish kidney-shaped and somewhat saclike (convex above, concave below), 0.8–1.4 mm across, concealing 30–50 sporangia, attached centrally at base of sinus (appearing dimpled), yellow ochre to light brown, without glandular hairs. **Sporangia:** 0.15–0.2 mm diameter, brown, stalks ca. 0.25 mm long. Sporulation early February–late November.

Native. Evergreen perennial herb of shady southern oak woodland, typically growing in loose, rich loam covered with leaf litter. In range, *Dryopteris arguta* is the most common, classic, woodland type of fern, easily recognized by having two rows of roundish kidney-shaped sori per pinnule. Teeth on the leaflets are sharp-pointed.

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