

Pellaea Link CLIFF-BRAKE

Pellaea andromedifolia (Kaulf.) Fée, COFFEE FERN. Perennial herb, evergreen, rhizomatous, fibrous-rooted, clump-forming, canopy open or dense with erect, ascending, and spreading, often entangled leaves, to 60 cm tall; shoots forming leaves from upper side of rhizome, developing leaves \pm congested at growing tips but becoming spaced when rhizome elongates, glabrous; fiddleheads to 7 mm diameter, densely scaly on petiole and tiny juvenile blade, the scales narrowly triangular with slender, hairlike, often flexible tips, \pm 3 mm long, translucent cinnamon brown, without fine hairs; rhizomes shallow, horizontal and creeping, knobby, on large individual $>$ 100 mm long and branched, $<$ 10 mm diameter, covered with overlapping, appressed scales, the scales stiff and narrowly triangular, $1.3\text{--}2.5 \times 0.3\text{--}0.5$ mm, minutely toothed or entire on margins, persistent; in \times -section whitish. **Leaves (fronds):** alternate, odd-3-pinnately compound, 3-pinnate at base near rachis otherwise 2-pinnate, with primary and especially secondary leaflets often opposite or subopposite, never flat, long-petiolate; petiole (stipe) cylindrical, 30–450 mm long, $>$ blade, straw-colored or tannish to cinnamon or almond brown, densely scaly belowground with scales like those on rhizome, sometimes glaucous; blade ovate in outline, $20\text{--}410 \times 15\text{--}200$ mm; rachis cylindrical, straight or zigzagged, colored like petiole, sparsely scaly; primary leaflets (3–)5–15 per side, opposite to alternate, spreading, \pm symmetric with leaflets on 1 side typically = other side, primary leaflets lanceolate to oblong in outline, to 125 mm long at base and somewhat reduced upward, grading from 2-pinnate at base to unlobed at tip; axis of primary leaflet colored like rachis, glabrous; secondary leaflets opposite to alternate, unlobed and oblong or ovate to lanceolate or pinnate with 3–9 leaflets, to 35 mm long; ultimate segments with petiolules $<$ 1 mm long to \pm sessile; ultimate blade segments elliptic to oblong or ovate to obovate, $1.7\text{--}13.8\text{(–}15) \times 1.4\text{--}8$ mm, dull green, when hydrated flat, cordate at base and rounded to truncate at tip and lacking a terminal point, pinnately veined with each principal lateral vein equally forked 1 or 2 times before reaching margin, margins becoming inrolled (revolute) when fertile, tightly inrolled during drought to form a \pm narrowly oblong division with roll regularly scalloped and having a minutely jagged margin edge, forming a false indusium. **Sori:** absent, false indusium from base nearly to tip, with sporangia submarginal on lower surface (set in from white fringe). **Sporangia:** 0.25–0.3 mm wide, brown, 64-spored. Sporulation winter–April.

Native. Perennial herb occasionally found in undisturbed habitat away from the immediate coast typically at the bases of shrubs or boulders. *Pellaea andromedifolia* overlaps sizes of ultimate leaflet segments of *P. mucronata* but tends to be larger, and coffee fern has shorter scales but lacks hairs (features that require magnification to see properly).

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