

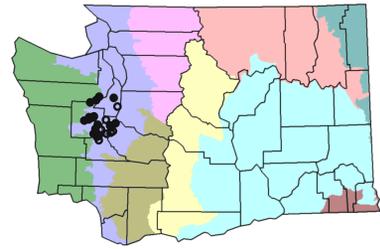
***Woodwardia fimbriata* Sm.**

giant chain fern

Blechnaceae - chain fern family

status: State Sensitive, BLM strategic, USFS strategic

rank: G5 / S2



General Description: Large, evergreen fern; stem forms a stout caudex covered by leaf bases, close to ground level. Leaves several, all similar, basal, clustered, 40-170 cm long. Petiole straw-colored, with orangish to reddish scales at the base. Blade pinnate-pinnatifid, pale green, elliptic-lanceolate, initially scaly-glandular but becoming smooth. Pinnae in 8-24 pairs, narrowly triangular to lanceolate, not jointed to the midrib. Veins netted, forming a single row of enclosed chambers along each side of the midrib, then free to margins.

Reproductive Characteristics: Sori mostly confined to enclosed chambers, forming a row along each side of the midrib, elongate, deeply sunken into blades. Identifiable year-round.

Identification Tips: This fern is one of the largest in WA and the only species of *Woodwardia* in the Pacific Northwest. Its sori are distinct, elongate, somewhat curved, chainlike along the midrib, and deeply sunken in the chambers enclosed by netted veins.

Range: B.C., WA, OR, CA, NV, AZ, and northern Baja California, Mexico.

Habitat/Ecology: Stream banks, shaded wet road banks, edges of bogs, and moist bluffs; among conifer and mixed conifer-hardwood forests, and usually near salt water. It can occur along moist bluffs that are somewhat prone to slope failure. Typical elevations in WA: 1-30 m (3-100 ft). There is one documented occurrence about 5 miles inland from salt water, at about 275 m (900 ft) elevation. Associated species include red alder (*Alnus rubra*), western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), big-leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis*), sword fern (*Polystichum munitum*), and maidenhair fern (*Adiantum aleuticum*).

Comments: This species has a limited distribution in WA; there are few known occurrences, and most have a small number of individuals. Threats include competition from invasive species, erosion, and collection. It is also rare in B.C.

References: Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 2.

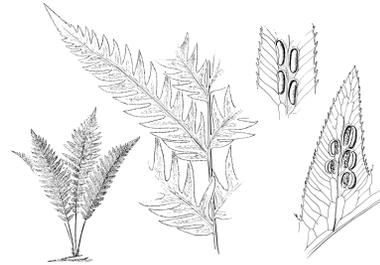


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