Taxon: Stenochlaena tenuifolia (Desv.) T.Moore **Family:** Blechnaceae

Common Name(s): African climbing fern
giant vine fern

Synonym(s): Acrostichum tenuifolium
Lomaria tenuifolia
Lomariobotrys tenuifolius
Lomariopsis tenuifolia
Polybotrya tenuifolia

Assessor: Chuck Chimera **Status:** Approved **End Date:** 13 Nov 2026

WRA Score: 12.0 **Designation:** H(HPWRA) **Rating:** High Risk

Keywords: Tropical fern, Climbing fern, Rhizomatous, Wetland habitat. Wind-dispersed spores

Qsn #	Question	Answer Option	Answer
101	Is the species highly domesticated?	y = -3, n = 0	n
102	Has the species become naturalized where grown?		
103	Does the species have weedy races?		
201	Species suited to tropical or subtropical climate(s) - If island is primarily wet habitat, then substitute "wet tropical" for "tropical or subtropical"	0 = low, 1 = intermediate, 2 = high (see Appendix 2)	High
202	Quality of climate match data	0 = low, 1 = intermediate, 2 = high (see Appendix 2)	High
203	Broad climate suitability (environmental versatility)	y = 1, n = 0	y
204	Native or naturalized in regions with tropical or subtropical climates	y = 1, n = 0	y
205	Does the species have a history of repeated introductions outside its natural range?	y= -2, ? = -1, n = 0	n
301	Naturalized beyond native range	y = 1*multiplier (see Appendix 2), n = question 205	y
302	Garden/amenity/disturbance weed		
303	Agricultural/forestry/horticultural weed	y = 2*multiplier (see Appendix 2), n = 0	n
304	Environmental weed	y = 2*multiplier (see Appendix 2), n = 0	n
305	Congeneric weed	y = 1*multiplier (see Appendix 2), n = 0	y
401	Produces spines, thorns or burrs	y = 1, n = 0	n
402	Allelopathic		
403	Parasitic	y = 1, n = 0	n
404	Unpalatable to grazing animals		
405	Toxic to animals	y = 1, n = 0	n
406	Host for recognized pests and pathogens		
407	Causes allergies or is otherwise toxic to humans	y = 1, n = 0	n
408	Creates a fire hazard in natural ecosystems		
409	Is a shade tolerant plant at some stage of its life cycle	y = 1, n = 0	y

Qsn #	Question	Answer Option	Answer
410	Tolerates a wide range of soil conditions (or limestone conditions if not a volcanic island)	y = 1, n = 0	n
411	Climbing or smothering growth habit	y = 1, n = 0	y
412	Forms dense thickets	y = 1, n = 0	n
501	Aquatic	y = 5, n = 0	n
502	Grass	y = 1, n = 0	n
503	Nitrogen fixing woody plant	y = 1, n = 0	n
504	Geophyte (herbaceous with underground storage organs -- bulbs, corms, or tubers)	y = 1, n = 0	n
601	Evidence of substantial reproductive failure in native habitat	y = 1, n = 0	n
602	Produces viable seed	y = 1, n = -1	y
603	Hybridizes naturally		
604	Self-compatible or apomictic	y = 1, n = -1	y
605	Requires specialist pollinators	y = -1, n = 0	n
606	Reproduction by vegetative fragmentation	y = 1, n = -1	y
607	Minimum generative time (years)		
701	Propagules likely to be dispersed unintentionally (plants growing in heavily trafficked areas)		
702	Propagules dispersed intentionally by people	y = 1, n = -1	y
703	Propagules likely to disperse as a produce contaminant	y = 1, n = -1	n
704	Propagules adapted to wind dispersal	y = 1, n = -1	y
705	Propagules water dispersed		
706	Propagules bird dispersed	y = 1, n = -1	n
707	Propagules dispersed by other animals (externally)		
708	Propagules survive passage through the gut		
801	Prolific seed production (>1000/m2)	y = 1, n = -1	y
802	Evidence that a persistent propagule bank is formed (>1 yr)		
803	Well controlled by herbicides		
804	Tolerates, or benefits from, mutilation, cultivation, or fire		
805	Effective natural enemies present locally (e.g. introduced biocontrol agents)		

Supporting Data:

Qsn #	Question	Answer
101	Is the species highly domesticated?	n
	Source(s)	Notes
	Grubben, G.J.H. & Denton, O.A. (ed.). (2004). Plant Resources of Tropical Africa. Volume 2. Vegetables. PROTA, Wageningen, Netherlands	[No evidence of domestication] "Origin and geographic distribution Steno- chlaena tenuifolia occurs naturally in the coastal regions of East and southern Africa, from Tanzania to the east coast of South Africa, and Madagascar. It is also recorded from eastern Zimbabwe. Stenochlaena mildbraedii, which is regarded as conspecific with Stenochlaena tenuifolia, is present in Bioko (Equatorial Guinea), and from Cameroon to Angola and Uganda. Stenochlaena tenuifolia has been introduced into the United States (Florida)."

102	Has the species become naturalized where grown?	
	Source(s)	Notes
	WRA Specialist. (2026). Personal Communication	NA

103	Does the species have weedy races?	
	Source(s)	Notes
	WRA Specialist. (2026). Personal Communication	NA

201	Species suited to tropical or subtropical climate(s) - If island is primarily wet habitat, then substitute "wet tropical" for "tropical or subtropical"	High
	Source(s)	Notes
	Grubben, G.J.H. & Denton, O.A. (ed.). (2004). Plant Resources of Tropical Africa. Volume 2. Vegetables. PROTA, Wageningen, Netherlands	"Stenochlaena tenuifolia occurs naturally in the coastal regions of East and southern Africa, from Tanzania to the east coast of South Africa, and Madagascar. It is also recorded from eastern Zimbabwe."

202	Quality of climate match data	High
	Source(s)	Notes
	Grubben, G.J.H. & Denton, O.A. (ed.). (2004). Plant Resources of Tropical Africa. Volume 2. Vegetables. PROTA, Wageningen, Netherlands	"Stenochlaena tenuifolia occurs naturally in the coastal regions of East and southern Africa, from Tanzania to the east coast of South Africa, and Madagascar. It is also recorded from eastern Zimbabwe."

203	Broad climate suitability (environmental versatility)	y
	Source(s)	Notes

Qsn #	Question	Answer
	Chambers, T. C. (2013). A review of the genus Stenochlaena (Blechnaceae, subfamily Stenochlaenoideae). Telopea, 15, 13-36	"Distribution and habitat: Stenochlaena tenuifolia is a widespread species (Fig. 11) extending in favourable habitats from tropical east Africa south through Mozambique to eastern South Africa, including Zululand, Natal, and Transkei, mainly in coastal forests and with isolated populations in the inland Barberton district of Transvaal at over 500 m and also inland at comparable high elevations in Mozambique, Zululand and Natal. The species is a vigorous liana climbing a wide range of tree species and usually is found in humid areas, often on stream margins in swampy places where soil moisture is present even in dry periods. This species is also present in Zanzibar and the Seychelles and Grande Comoro Island, and also a number of localities in Madagascar (Christensen 1931, Tardieu-Blot 1958). Lorence (1978) reports that S. tenuifolia has been recorded but not recently seen in the wild in Mauritius, probably due to the clearing for agriculture of much of the forested areas. I have not seen any records for this taxon from the other islands of the Mascarenes, i.e., Réunion and Rodrigues."
	Parris, B. S. (2006). Blechnaceae. In H. J. Beentje & S. A. Ghazanfar (Eds.), Flora of Tropical East Africa. Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew	"HAB. Terrestrial and epiphytic essentially in swamp forest, and swampy stream bottoms, Elaeis-Pandanus associations, mixed evergreen forest, also fringing forest; 0-1200 m" [Elevation range >1000 m]
	Roux, J. P. (2001). Conspectus of southern African Pteridophyta. Southern African Botanical Diversity Network Report No. 13. SABONET, Pretoria	"Terrestrial, becoming epiphytic, in wet forests and swamp forest margins, exposed or lightly shaded, 20-700 m."

204	Native or naturalized in regions with tropical or subtropical climates	y
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	Grubben, G.J.H. & Denton, O.A. (ed.). (2004). Plant Resources of Tropical Africa. Volume 2. Vegetables. PROTA, Wageningen, Netherlands	"Stenochlaena tenuifolia occurs naturally in the coastal regions of East and southern Africa, from Tanzania to the east coast of South Africa, and Madagascar. It is also recorded from eastern Zimbabwe."

205	Does the species have a history of repeated introductions outside its natural range?	n
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	POWO (2026). Plants of the World Online. Facilitated by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Published on the Internet; https://powo.science.kew.org/. [Accessed 12 Nov 2026]	"Introduced into: Florida "
	Gallaher, T.J., Brock, K., Kennedy, B.H., Imada, C.T., Imada, K., & Walvoord, N. (2026). Plants of Hawai'i. http://www.plantsofhawaii.org. [Accessed 12 Nov 2026]	"Only found in cultivation"

301	Naturalized beyond native range	y
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	Gallaher, T.J., Brock, K., Kennedy, B.H., Imada, C.T., Imada, K., & Walvoord, N. (2026). Plants of Hawai'i. http://www.plantsofhawaii.org. [Accessed 12 Nov 2026]	"Only found in cultivation"

Qsn #	Question	Answer
	Weaver, Jr., R.E. (2004). Botany Section. TRI-OLOGY 43 (4): 1-11	"Stenochlaena tenuifolia (Desv.) T. Moore. (A genus of six species native to the Old World tropics.) Blechnaceae. Giant vine fern. This highly unusual fern is native to tropical Asia, Australia, and Polynesia. It is reported to have naturalized in a few counties in Florida, but is still rare as a wild plant. This is a vine-like fern climbing high into trees, with strongly dimorphic fronds. The fertile fronds are twice pinnately divided into very narrow pinnae, but these are probably not formed in northern Florida. The sterile fronds are up to a meter long, with slender, finely serrate, long acuminate pinnae. There is a small but conspicuous gland at the base of each pinna, an unusual feature among ferns. This plant is occasionally cultivated in Florida, but this is probably at the limit of its cold-hardiness. (Alachua County; B2004-417; Claudia Schumacher; 9 July 2004) (Hoshizake and Moran 2001)"
	Wunderlin, R. P., Hansen, B. F., & Hall, D. W. (1985). The vascular flora of central Florida: Taxonomic and nomenclatural changes, additional taxa. SIDA, Contributions to Botany, 11(2), 232-244	"Stenochlaena tenuifolia Moore. A native of Asia and occasionally cultivated, this species was found as an escape at one site in central Florida in the 1930's where it still occurs. It was reported by Lakela and Long (1976) but overlooked by Wunderlin (1982). It was again found in 1984 at a second site. Hillsborough Co .: E. St. Jobn s.n. (FLAS); Wunderlin & Beckner 9824 (USF)."
	Morton, J.F. (1976). Pestiferous spread of many ornamental and fruit species in South Florida. Proceedings of the Florida State Horticultural Society 89: 348-353	"Stenochlaena tenuifolia Moore. GIANT VINE FERN. Old World tropics. Has escaped in hammocks from southern Florida to Hillsborough County (6, 11)."
	Nelson, G. (2000). Ferns of Florida: A Reference and Field Guide. Pineapple Press Inc.	"The five species described below do not include the giant vine fern [Stenochlaena tenuifolia (Desvaux) T. Moore] (see photo 30), an Old World species first described in 1768 from specimens collected in India. It sometimes escapes cultivation in Florida and was first collected in the state near Tampa in 1932 by Bessie W. Miles (Small, 1938; Lakela & Long 1976), and later by Richard Wunderlin (personal communication, 1998) in Hillsborough County in 1984 and Pinellas County in 1989. More recently (1996), Keith Bradley discovered a small colony of this species at Matheson Hammock Park in Dade County. This colony occurs at the edge of a heavily disturbed rockland hammock near Fairchild Tropical Garden, the likely source of the population. It has apparently not otherwise been recently collected, and has not been considered part of the state's current naturalized flora by Lellinger (1985), Cranfill (1993), or Keller (1994). It is included as a naturalized species by Wunderlin (1998). Its high-climbing habit, in conjunction with its pinnate sterile fronds and bipinnate fertile fronds with linear segments which are continuously covered below with sori distinguish it from other of Florida's ferns."
	WRA Specialist. (2026). Personal Communication	Yes, but limited. Small naturalized populations near botanical gardens in Florida (Miami-Dade, Pinellas); not naturalized in Hawai‘i

302	Garden/amenity/disturbance weed	
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	Grubben, G.J.H. & Denton, O.A. (ed.). (2004). Plant Resources of Tropical Africa. Volume 2. Vegetables. PROTA, Wageningen, Netherlands	"In the United States Stenochlaena tenuifolia is regarded as a weed. A study in Zululand, however, indicated that it had no measurable effect on the volume growth of Pinus elliottii Engelm."
	Edible Plant Database. (2026). Stenochlaena tenuifolia. https://edibleplantdb.org/plants/9832/stenochlaena-tenuifolia. [Accessed 12 Nov 2026]	"The plant was introduced to Florida, where it is now considered to be a weed." [Impacts unspecified but likely related to climbing growth habit which could impact trees or other desirable vegetation]
	WRA Specialist. (2026). Personal Communication	Listed as a weed, but unclear what, if any, impacts it is having within its introduced range. Treated as naturalized in Florida for the purposes of this assessment, but weed status at this point remains unclear.

303	Agricultural/forestry/horticultural weed	n

Qsn #	Question	Answer
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	Grubben, G.J.H. & Denton, O.A. (ed.). (2004). Plant Resources of Tropical Africa. Volume 2. Vegetables. PROTA, Wageningen, Netherlands	[No detrimental effects on forestry reported] "In the United States Stenochlaena tenuifolia is regarded as a weed. A study in Zululand, however, indicated that it had no measurable effect on the volume growth of Pinus elliottii Engelm."
	Randall, R.P. (2017). A Global Compendium of Weeds. 3rd Edition. Perth, Western Australia. R.P. Randall	[No evidence] "Stenochlaena tenuifolia (Desv.) T.Moore Blechnaceae Total N° of Refs: 4 Habit: perennial Vine Preferred Climate/s: Tropical Origin: Africa Major Pathway/s: Crop, Ornamental Dispersed by: Humans, Escapee References: United States of America-N-101, South Africa-W-121, United States of America-C-1329, Global-CD-1611."

304	Environmental weed	n
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	Grubben, G.J.H. & Denton, O.A. (ed.). (2004). Plant Resources of Tropical Africa. Volume 2. Vegetables. PROTA, Wageningen, Netherlands	"In the United States Stenochlaena tenuifolia is regarded as a weed. A study in Zululand, however, indicated that it had no measurable effect on the volume growth of Pinus elliottii Engelm." [Small naturalized populations in Florida with no documented impacts on native communities; not listed as invasive in sources reviewed]
	Randall, R.P. (2017). A Global Compendium of Weeds. 3rd Edition. Perth, Western Australia. R.P. Randall	[No evidence] "Stenochlaena tenuifolia (Desv.) T.Moore Blechnaceae Total N° of Refs: 4 Habit: perennial Vine Preferred Climate/s: Tropical Origin: Africa Major Pathway/s: Crop, Ornamental Dispersed by: Humans, Escapee References: United States of America-N-101, South Africa-W-121, United States of America-C-1329, Global-CD-1611."
	Weaver, Jr., R.E. (2004). Botany Section. TRI-OLOGY 43 (4): 1-11	[No evidence] "Stenochlaena tenuifolia (Desv.) T. Moore. (A genus of six species native to the Old World tropics.) Blechnaceae. Giant vine fern. This highly unusual fern is native to tropical Asia, Australia, and Polynesia. It is reported to have naturalized in a few counties in Florida, but is still rare as a wild plant. This is a vine-like fern climbing high into trees, with strongly dimorphic fronds. The fertile fronds are twice pinnately divided into very narrow pinnae, but these are probably not formed in northern Florida. The sterile fronds are up to a meter long, with slender, finely serrate, long acuminate pinnae. There is a small but conspicuous gland at the base of each pinna, an unusual feature among ferns. This plant is occasionally cultivated in Florida, but this is probably at the limit of its cold-hardiness. (Alachua County; B2004- 417; Claudia Schumacher; 9 July 2004) (Hoshizake and Moran 2001)"

305	Congeneric weed	y
	Source(s)	**Notes**

Qsn #	Question	Answer
	Grubben, G.J.H. & Denton, O.A. (ed.). (2004). Plant Resources of Tropical Africa. Volume 2. Vegetables. PROTA, Wageningen, Netherlands	"Management No cultivation of Stenochlaena tenuifolia is known, except for its use as ground cover. It does not seem to be as much of a weed as Stenochlaena palustris in South-East Asia, for which various studies have been carried out to control it, for instance in rubber plantations. In the United States Stenochlaena tenuifolia is regarded as a weed. A study in Zululand, however, indicated that it had no measurable effect on the volume growth of Pinus elliottii Engelm."
	Chung, G. F. (2022). The climbing swamp fern, Stenochlaena palustris (Burm. f.) Bedd. (Blechnaceae)–A noxious weed in oil palm estates and its management. The Planter, 98(1161), 855-870	"S. palustris is one of the weed species that has emerged in rubber, oil palm, cocoa and other crops (Ipor et al., 1993). Many coastal oil palm estates in West Malaysia with low lying fields (both clay soils and peat areas) are badly infested by S. palustris, especially when control of the weed is poor or if there is a delay in weeding operation in the estates. In oil palm planted in peat soils and with the zero-burning technique in land preparation, most of the early weed species are indigenous, mainly ferns including S. palustris (Parish et al., 2019). If the weed is not controlled or eradicated early,"
	De Winter, W.P. and Amoroso, V.B. (eds.). (2003). Plant Resources of South-East Asia No 15(2). Cryptogams: Ferns and fern allies. Backhuys Publishers, Leiden, The Netherlands	[S. palustris described as a a noxious weed in rubber plantations] "Ecology S. palustris is common on rather wet ground such as freshwater swamp forests, sago swamps, behind mangroves or beach vegetation, along rivers, marshes and on floating vegetation. Most commonly it is a scrambling, high-climbing epiphyte in periodically inundated areas, where the lower parts of the rhizome are frequently sub- merged. It prefers open sites and secondary forest, sometimes fully exposed to the sun but preferring partial shade, and is found in the lowlands and low hills up to 300-400 m in Thailand and New Guinea, and to 900 m in Java. It also occurs in the rain forest and in areas that are never flooded. In rubber plantations it can become a noxious weed. Fertile leaves are infrequently produced, possibly stimulated by a period of dry weather. As a result sporelings are rare but the plants spread rapidly by vegetative means."
	Chambers, T. C. (2013). A review of the genus Stenochlaena (Blechnaceae, subfamily Stenochlaenoideae). Telopea, 15, 13-36	[Stenochlaena palustris] "It has also been reported as a weed in rubber and oil palm plantations and in abandoned gardens."

Qsn #	Question	Answer
401	Produces spines, thorns or burrs	n
	Source(s)	Notes
	Chambers, T. C. (2013). A review of the genus Stenochlaena (Blechnaceae, subfamily Stenochlaenoideae). Telopea, 15, 13-36	[No evidence] "Rhizome extensive, usually at least 20 m long, weakly dorsiventral, but radially symmetrical in cross section, creeping and climbing (and always connected to the ground), 1–2 cm diameter, green to purple-black in fresh material, scaly in young stages becoming ± glabrous except for a few persistent scales; scales dark-brown, small, linear triangular acuminate, often with minute marginal outgrowths 1–5 mm long; sterile fronds large, up to 3 m long; stipes stramineous, glabrous, reported to be up to 2 cm diameter towards the base and up to about one third the length of the frond; sterile lamina, ovate to oblong, 0.5–2 m long and 2–70 (– 75) cm wide, chartaceous to coriaceous. Sterile pinnae about 20 pairs, oblong-ovate to linear-lanceolate, tending to be cuneate at the rhachis, 15–35 cm long x 2–3.8 cm wide near the base; pinnae glabrous on both surfaces, glossy green adaxially, dull green abaxially and sometimes with a conspicuous gland at the base on the anterior margin; margins finely serrulate to serrate, usually tapering evenly to an acuminate apex which is sometimes shortly attenuate; base of pinna rounded to shortly (and sometimes unequally) cuneate, shortly stalked, not articulate; terminal pinna about the same dimensions as the sub-terminal lateral pinnae, occasionally very much longer. Fertile lamina bipinnate, occasionally pinnate distally, usually shorter than sterile lamina, typically 0.5–1.5 m long; fertile pinnae 25–30 pairs, 8–25 cm or more long and very slender, 1.5–3 mm wide, alternate and sometimes decurrent, adnate to shortly stalked with the gland on the stalk."

402	Allelopathic	
	Source(s)	Notes
	WRA Specialist. (2026). Personal Communication	Unknown. No evidence found

403	Parasitic	n
	Source(s)	Notes
	Grubben, G.J.H. & Denton, O.A. (ed.). (2004). Plant Resources of Tropical Africa. Volume 2. Vegetables. PROTA, Wageningen, Netherlands	"Large fern with straggling and climbing rhizome, growing high up into trees; rhizome scales sparse." [No evidence]

404	Unpalatable to grazing animals	
	Source(s)	Notes
	Grubben, G.J.H. & Denton, O.A. (ed.). (2004). Plant Resources of Tropical Africa. Volume 2. Vegetables. PROTA, Wageningen, Netherlands	"Uses The young fronds (croziers, fiddle-heads) are eaten in Madagascar. Stenochlaena tenuifolia can be used as ground cover. In Congo the sap is taken with a ripe banana as an aphrodisiac."
	WRA Specialist. (2026). Personal Communication	Unknown. No data on grazing or toxicity; young fronds eaten by people in Madagascar (PROTA 2004); no chemical studies known.

405	Toxic to animals	n
	Source(s)	Notes
	Tropical Plants Database, Ken Fern. (2026). Stenochlaena tenuifolia. https://tropical.theferns.info/viewtropical.php?id=Stenochlaena+tenuifolia. [Accessed 13 Nov 2026]	"Known Hazards None known"

Qsn #	Question	Answer
	Quattrocchi, U. (2012). CRC World Dictionary of Medicinal and Poisonous Plants: Common Names, Scientific Names, Eponyms, Synonyms, and Etymology. CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL	No evidence
	WRA Specialist. (2026). Personal Communication	No evidence located. No reports of toxicity to animals; no chemical studies known (PROTA 2004); young fronds eaten by people in Madagascar.

406	Host for recognized pests and pathogens	
	Source(s)	Notes
	WRA Specialist. (2026). Personal Communication	Unknown – No species-specific records were found identifying Stenochlaena tenuifolia as a host for recognized agricultural pests or plant pathogens. Available botanical and horticultural references provide little information on pest and disease associations. The absence of documented records does not necessarily indicate resistance or freedom from pests and diseases.

407	Causes allergies or is otherwise toxic to humans	n
	Source(s)	Notes
	Quattrocchi, U. (2012). CRC World Dictionary of Medicinal and Poisonous Plants: Common Names, Scientific Names, Eponyms, Synonyms, and Etymology. CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL	
	Tropical Plants Database, Ken Fern. (2026). Stenochlaena tenuifolia. https://tropical.theferns.info/viewtropical.php?id=Stenochlaena+tenuifolia. [Accessed 13 Nov 2026]	"Known Hazards None known"
	Grubben, G.J.H. & Denton, O.A. (ed.). (2004). Plant Resources of Tropical Africa. Volume 2. Vegetables. PROTA, Wageningen, Netherlands	[No evidence] "Uses The young fronds (croziers, fiddle-heads) are eaten in Madagascar. Stenochlaena tenuifolia can be used as ground cover. In Congo the sap is taken with a ripe banana| as an aphrodisiac."

408	Creates a fire hazard in natural ecosystems	
	Source(s)	Notes
	Chambers, T. C. (2013). A review of the genus Stenochlaena (Blechnaceae, subfamily Stenochlaenoideae). Telopea, 15, 13-36	"The species is a vigorous liana climbing a wide range of tree species and usually is found in humid areas, often on stream margins in swampy places where soil moisture is present even in dry periods." [Occurs humid, wet habitats]
	Luvuno, L. (2013). Burning wetlands: The influence of fire on wetland vegetation structure and composition. Master's thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal	Unknown – Stenochlaena tenuifolia has been observed to influence fire behavior in South African wetlands. Luvuno (2013) found that fern clumps reached relatively high temperatures during experimental burns and that their height contributed to increased flame heights. However, the study also suggests that dense fern growth can suppress fire occurrence and spread during periods of fire exclusion. Although the species may influence fire intensity under certain conditions, there is insufficient evidence to establish that it creates a fire hazard in natural ecosystems.

Qsn #	Question	Answer
409	Is a shade tolerant plant at some stage of its life cycle	y
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	Edible Plant Database. (2026). Stenochlaena tenuifolia. https://edibleplantdb.org/plants/9832/stenochlaena-tenuifolia. [Accessed 12 Nov 2026]	"A very adaptable plant, able to grow in full sun even though deep to moderate shade are its normal habitat." ... "Stenochlaena tenuifolia can be used as ground cover. An excellent ground cover for positions that are too wet and shaded for other plants, able to quickly cover large areas."

410	Tolerates a wide range of soil conditions (or limestone conditions if not a volcanic island)	n
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	Edible Plant Database. (2026). Stenochlaena tenuifolia. https://edibleplantdb.org/plants/9832/stenochlaena-tenuifolia. [Accessed 13 Nov 2026]	"Plants can succeed in moist soils as well as the wetter conditions they usually grow in. Prefers an acid soil."
	Tropical Plants Database, Ken Fern. (2026). Stenochlaena tenuifolia. https://tropical.theferns.info/viewtropical.php?id=Stenochlaena+tenuifolia. [Accessed 13 Nov 2026]	"Plants can succeed in moist soils as well as the wetter conditions they usually grow in[200]. Prefers an acid soil[200]."
	Chambers, T. C. (2013). A review of the genus Stenochlaena (Blechnaceae, subfamily Stenochlaenoideae). Telopea, 15, 13-36	"The species is a vigorous liana climbing a wide range of tree species and usually is found in humid areas, often on stream margins in swampy places where soil moisture is present even in dry periods."

411	Climbing or smothering growth habit	y
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	Grubben, G.J.H. & Denton, O.A. (ed.). (2004). Plant Resources of Tropical Africa. Volume 2. Vegetables. PROTA, Wageningen, Netherlands	"Ecology Stenochlaena tenuifolia is a straggling and climbing fern of the coastal swamp forest."
	Sim, T. R. (1915). The Ferns of South Africa: Containing Descriptions and Figures of the Ferns and Fern Allies of South Africa. United Kingdom: University Press	Wood remarks-"Its rhizomes sometimes almost encircle the trees upon which it grows, and its fronds are often produced at twenty to thirty feet from the ground; the fertile fronds to be found only about January or February."

412	Forms dense thickets	n
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	Grubben, G.J.H. & Denton, O.A. (ed.). (2004). Plant Resources of Tropical Africa. Volume 2. Vegetables. PROTA, Wageningen, Netherlands	"Stenochlaena tenuifolia is a straggling and climbing fern of the coastal swamp forest."
	Parris, B. S. (2006). Blechnaceae. In H. J. Beentje & S. A. Ghazanfar (Eds.), Flora of Tropical East Africa. Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew	"Terrestrial and epiphytic essentially in swamp forest, and swampy stream bottoms, Elaeis-Pandanus associations, mixed evergreen forest, also fringing forest; 0-1200 m"
	Chambers, T. C. (2013). A review of the genus Stenochlaena (Blechnaceae, subfamily Stenochlaenoideae). Telopea, 15, 13-36	"The species is a vigorous liana climbing a wide range of tree species and usually is found in humid areas, often on stream margins in swampy places where soil moisture is present even in dry periods."
	WRA Specialist. (2026). Personal Communication	Not documented as forming thickets. Locally abundant, clothing tree trunks in swamp forest and abundant on trees in Florida wet hammock, but no reports of smothering or dense monospecific stands.

Qsn #	Question	Answer
501	Aquatic	n
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	Grubben, G.J.H. & Denton, O.A. (ed.). (2004). Plant Resources of Tropical Africa. Volume 2. Vegetables. PROTA, Wageningen, Netherlands	[Terrestrial] "Ecology Stenochlaena tenuifolia is a straggling and climbing fern of the coastal swamp forest."

502	Grass	n
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	Gallaher, T.J., Brock, K., Kennedy, B.H., Imada, C.T., Imada, K., & Walvoord, N. (2026). Plants of Hawai'i. http://www.plantsofhawaii.org. [Accessed 10 Nov 2026]	"Order: Polypodiales Family: Blechnaceae"

503	Nitrogen fixing woody plant	n
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	Gallaher, T.J., Brock, K., Kennedy, B.H., Imada, C.T., Imada, K., & Walvoord, N. (2026). Plants of Hawai'i. http://www.plantsofhawaii.org. [Accessed 10 Nov 2026]	"Order: Polypodiales Family: Blechnaceae"

504	Geophyte (herbaceous with underground storage organs -- bulbs, corms, or tubers)	n
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	Grubben, G.J.H. & Denton, O.A. (ed.). (2004). Plant Resources of Tropical Africa. Volume 2. Vegetables. PROTA, Wageningen, Netherlands	"Large fern with straggling and climbing rhizome, growing high up into trees; rhizome scales sparse."

601	Evidence of substantial reproductive failure in native habitat	n
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	Chambers, T. C. (2013). A review of the genus Stenochlaena (Blechnaceae, subfamily Stenochlaenoideae). Telopea, 15, 13-36	"Distribution and habitat: Stenochlaena tenuifolia is a widespread species (Fig. 11) extending in favourable habitats from tropical east Africa south through Mozambique to eastern South Africa, including Zululand, Natal, and Transkei, mainly in coastal forests and with isolated populations in the inland Barberton district of Transvaal at over 500 m and also inland at comparable high elevations in Mozambique, Zululand and Natal."
	Grubben, G.J.H. & Denton, O.A. (ed.). (2004). Plant Resources of Tropical Africa. Volume 2. Vegetables. PROTA, Wageningen, Netherlands	"Genetic resources and breeding Stenochlaena tenuifolia does not seem to be endangered. No germplasm collections are known."

Qsn #	Question	Answer
602	Produces viable seed	y
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	Klekowski, E. J., Jr. (1970). Evidence against self-incompatibility and for genetic lethals in the fern Stenochlaena tenuifolia (Desv.) Moore. Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society, 63(2), 171-176	"The stock cultures were flooded 53 days after spore sowing and sporophytes did not appear until40 days later, indicating that the archegoniate condition probably persisted even longer." [This genetic study by Klekowski on S. tenuifolia was based on growing gametophytes from spores collected from a cultivated sporophyte. The successful cultivation of these gametophytes and the subsequent production of sporophytes in his experiments directly demonstrate that the spores used were viable.]
	Van Jaarsveld, E. (2013). Waterwise Gardening in South Africa and Namibia. Penguin Random House South Africa, Cape Town, SA	Propagation - Spores

603	Hybridizes naturally	
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	Chambers, T. C. (2013). A review of the genus Stenochlaena (Blechnaceae, subfamily Stenochlaenoideae). Telopea, 15, 13-36	[Unknown for S. tenuifolia] "There is evidence suggesting that hybrids may occur between several species. Stenochlaena palustris, the most widespread and variable taxon, appears to form hybrids with S. milnei. It is possible that S. milnei is itself of hybrid origin, a view tentatively put forward by Holttum (1971) when he reported that S. milnei possessed some characters “almost exactly intermediate” between S. cumingii and S. palustris."

604	Self-compatible or apomictic	y
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	Klekowski, E. J., Jr. (1970). Evidence against self-incompatibility and for genetic lethals in the fern Stenochlaena tenuifolia (Desv.) Moore. Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society, 63(2), 171-176	"The mating system of S. tenuifolia was studied morphologically and genetically. Morphological studies have shown that the intergametophytic mating system is based upon an initial prolonged archegoniate condition prior to the formation of antheridia. This kind of mating system is prevalent in most of the Blechnaceae. A consequence of this mating system is the tendency for the occurrence of outbreeding and heterozygous sporophytes. Such sporophytes can occasionally be shown to be heterozygous for lethal alleles and give genetic data which may be expected from a fern which has a self-incompatibility system. A comparative study of the results of paired and isolated gametophyte populations which have originated from a number of different parental sporophytes may indicate whether self-incompatibility or a high frequency of lethal alleles are present." [Isolated gametophytes produced sporophytes through intragametophytic selfing (13 of 25), though with high embryo lethality; no apogamy was observed]

605	Requires specialist pollinators	n
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	Mehltreter, K., Walker, L.R. & Sharpe, J.M. (2010). Fern Ecology. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK	"Gametophytes may be male or female, or may produce both types of gametangia. For fertilization, the sperm cell must swim through water to an egg cell" [No. A fern; reproduces by spores. Fertilization is water-mediated and gametophytes can self-fertilize]

606	Reproduction by vegetative fragmentation	y

Qsn #	Question	Answer
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	Hoshizaki, B.J. & Moran, R.C. (2001). Fern Grower's Manual. Revised and Expanded Edition. Timber Press, Portland, OR	"Plants may be propagated from apical sections of the rhizome but are slow to establish."
	Chambers, T. C. (2013). A review of the genus Stenochlaena (Blechnaceae, subfamily Stenochlaenoideae). Telopea, 15, 13-36	"Rhizome extensive, usually at least 20 m long, weakly dorsiventral, but radially symmetrical in cross section, creeping and climbing (and always connected to the ground),"
	WRA Specialist. (2026). Personal Communication	Probably yes. Long creeping/climbing rhizome with adventitious roots; propagated by division or cuttings in cultivation. No direct evidence of natural fragmentation located.

607	Minimum generative time (years)	
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	WRA Specialist. (2026). Personal Communication	Unknown. Sporophytes appear about 3 months after spore sowing in culture (Klekowski 1970), but time to first fertile frond is not documented.

701	Propagules likely to be dispersed unintentionally (plants growing in heavily trafficked areas)	
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	WRA Specialist. (2026). Personal Communication	Unknown - Stenochlaena tenuifolia produces small spores that are generally dispersed by wind, creating some potential for incidental transport from plants growing near roads, trails, or other heavily trafficked areas.

702	Propagules dispersed intentionally by people	y
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	Randall, R.P. (2017). A Global Compendium of Weeds. 3rd Edition. Perth, Western Australia. R.P. Randall	"Major Pathway/s: Crop, Ornamental Dispersed by: Humans, Escapee"

703	Propagules likely to disperse as a produce contaminant	n
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	Randall, R.P. (2017). A Global Compendium of Weeds. 3rd Edition. Perth, Western Australia. R.P. Randall	"Major Pathway/s: Crop, Ornamental Dispersed by: Humans, Escapee" [No. Not a crop weed; spores are unlikely to contaminate produce. No interception or contamination records located.]

704	Propagules adapted to wind dispersal	y
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	Mehltreter, K., Walker, L.R. & Sharpe, J.M. (2010). Fern Ecology. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK	"Fern spores are released from the sporangia, usually dispersed by wind, and then develop into independent haploid gametophytic plants"

705	Propagules water dispersed	
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	Chambers, T. C. (2013). A review of the genus Stenochlaena (Blechnaceae, subfamily Stenochlaenoideae). Telopea, 15, 13-36	"The species is a vigorous liana climbing a wide range of tree species and usually is found in humid areas, often on stream margins in swampy places where soil moisture is present even in dry periods."

Qsn #	Question	Answer
	WRA Specialist. (2026). Personal Communication	Unknown - Stenochlaena tenuifolia is commonly found in wetland habitats, but water dispersal of its spores or rhizome fragments has not been documented. Adaptation for hydrochory cannot be inferred solely from its occurrence in wetlands.

706	Propagules bird dispersed	n
	Source(s)	Notes
	Mehltreter, K., Walker, L.R. & Sharpe, J.M. (2010). Fern Ecology. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK	"Fern spores are released from the sporangia, usually dispersed by wind, and then develop into independent haploid gametophytic plants" [Bird dispersal is not documented, and the species lacks fleshy fruits or other obvious adaptations for bird-mediated transport.]

707	Propagules dispersed by other animals (externally)	
	Source(s)	Notes
	WRA Specialist. (2026). Personal Communication	Unknown - No species-specific evidence was found documenting external dispersal of Stenochlaena tenuifolia spores by animals. Although spores may adhere incidentally to animal surfaces, such dispersal has not been demonstrated.

708	Propagules survive passage through the gut	
	Source(s)	Notes
	WRA Specialist. (2026). Personal Communication	Unknown. No data for S. tenuifolia; spores of other ferns survive gut passage in slugs and waterbirds

801	Prolific seed production (>1000/m2)	y
	Source(s)	Notes
	Gordon, D. R., Mitterdorfer, B., Pheloung, P. C., Ansari, S., Buddenhagen, C., Chimera, C., ... & Williams, P. A. (2010). Guidance for addressing the Australian Weed Risk Assessment questions. Plant Protection Quarterly, 25(2): 56-74	"Assume 'yes' for fern taxa unless contradictory evidence exists."

802	Evidence that a persistent propagule bank is formed (>1 yr)	
	Source(s)	Notes
	WRA Specialist. (2026). Personal Communication	Unknown. No spore bank or longevity data for S. tenuifolia; some ferns form persistent spore banks, but longevity varies widely among species.

803	Well controlled by herbicides	
	Source(s)	Notes
	Chung, G. F. (2022). The climbing swamp fern, Stenochlaena palustris (Burm. f.) Bedd. (Blechnaceae)–A noxious weed in oil palm estates and its management. The Planter, 98(1161), 855-870	Unknown. No herbicide efficacy data for S. tenuifolia. Congener S. palustris is controlled by several herbicides in oil palm, but typically needs repeated applications because of rhizome regrowth

804	Tolerates, or benefits from, mutilation, cultivation, or fire	

Qsn #	Question	Answer
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	WRA Specialist. (2026). Personal Communication	Unknown - Stenochlaena tenuifolia spreads by long-creeping rhizomes, but no species-specific evidence was found demonstrating that it tolerates or benefits from cutting, cultivation, or fire. Rhizomatous growth alone does not establish that it resprouts following damage or disturbance.

805	**Effective natural enemies present locally (e.g. introduced biocontrol agents)**	
	Source(s)	**Notes**
	WRA Specialist. (2026). Personal Communication	Unknown

Summary of Risk Traits:

High-risk traits
Suited to tropical and subtropical climates, with broad climate suitability
Naturalized in Florida (small populations)
Congener (S. palustris) is a noxious crop weed
Climbing, smothering habit
Shade tolerant
Viable spores and self-compatible
Reproduces by vegetative fragmentation
Prolific spore production (assumed for ferns)
Wind-dispersed spores
Spread intentionally by people (ornamental use)

Low-risk traits
No documented agricultural, forestry, or environmental weed impacts
Narrow soil tolerance (moist, acidic swamp soils)
No spines, thorns, or burrs; not parasitic
Not toxic to animals or humans
Not aquatic, a grass, nitrogen-fixing, or a geophyte
Not a produce contaminant or bird-dispersed