

Athyrium japonicum

Adventive in Horowhenua

About 1972 I brought some plants of *Athyrium japonicum* (Thunb.) Cop. from Waipu, Northland. I have found that these grow very successfully in my Levin garden either in partial sunshine or in shade. In view of their acceptance of local conditions it is not so surprising that they are known to occur spontaneously elsewhere in the district.

In the early 1960's P. C. Gardner, nurseryman, had a plant shop in Levin, in one corner of which was a group of ferns growing around an artificial waterfall. In a planter box nearby, a fern came up and was recognised as *Athyrium japonicum*. In answer to an inquiry from me Mr Gardner said that the soil had been brought from the Rotorua district, around some other plants.

In October 1977, while being shown around the gardens of the Kimberley Horticultural Research Station, I was intrigued by a group of ferns planted in a south-facing angle of a building. Amongst the more common species were some young *Athyrium japonicum* plants. I asked about their origin and was told that a mulch of Hauraki peat had been put around the common ferns and the *Athyrium* had come up later.

As they can thrive around Levin, perhaps they may be found in other places, here or elsewhere, following the use of commercial peat. This could prove confusing for botanists of the future.

Native in Rangitikei

In November 1977 the Levin Native Flora Club visited K. H. Smith's bush, Marton. In a damp and rather open part of the track through the fenced bush, the eagle eye of Mrs L. Chrystall noticed a number of pale green fronds which she recognised as *Athyrium*, and interest quickened when it appeared that these could be *A. japonicum*. No fertile fronds were seen so two small pieces of rhizome were taken for cultivation. Mrs Chrystall's piece is receiving V.I.P. treatment in a pot and the author's is planted in the open garden, experience having shown that no cossetting is needed. We eagerly awaited fertile fronds of sufficient size to send specimens to the Botany Division for the record. Some kotowing by the author showed that the newest fronds on her plant were producing sori, and a tiny pinna was picked to confirm that it was indeed *A. japonicum*. There seems no likelihood in this case that the Rangitikei colony is growing other than naturally.

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