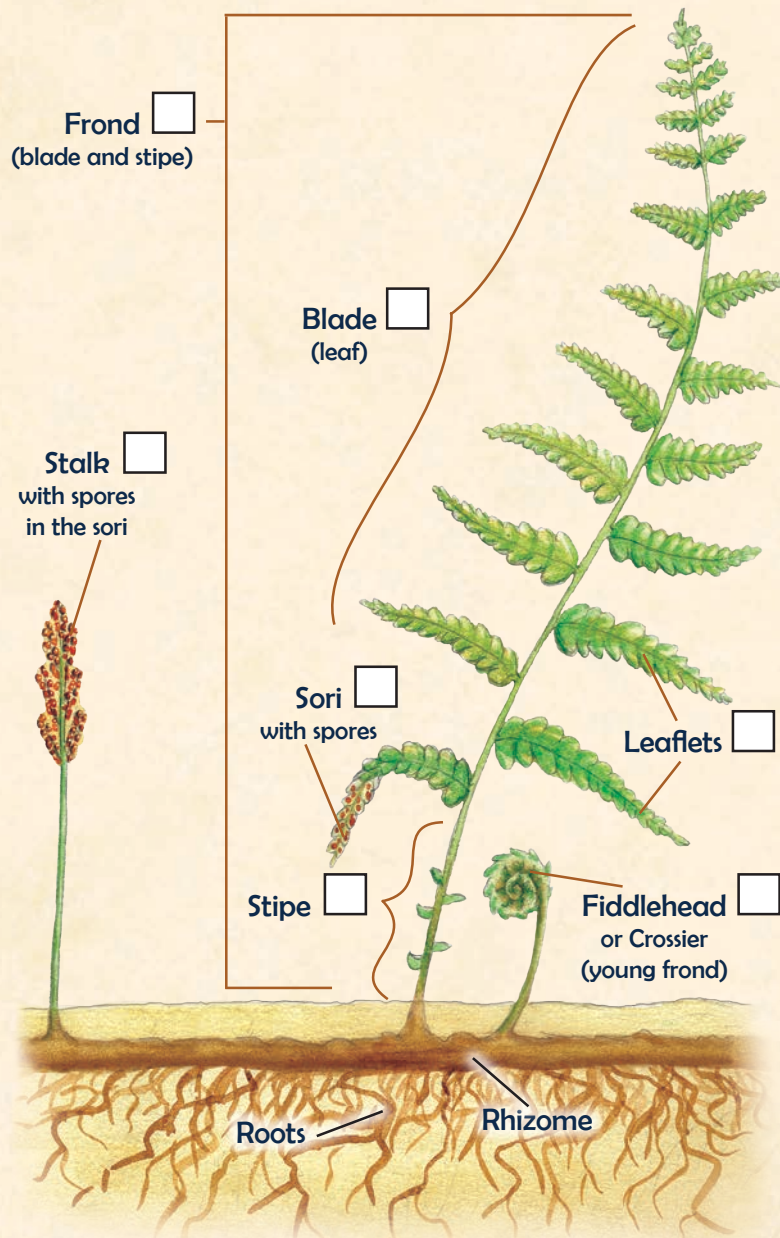


Fern PARTS

The image below shows all the major parts that might be found on a fern. Find a fern near the trail.

How many different parts can you identify?

Note: not all ferns have all of these parts.



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Finding FERNs

Have you ever walked on a path with ferns and wondered if there was a dinosaur nearby?

Ferns are some of the oldest types of plants on Earth and were one of the dominant plants when dinosaurs lived. Today, ferns grow all over the world in many shapes and sizes.



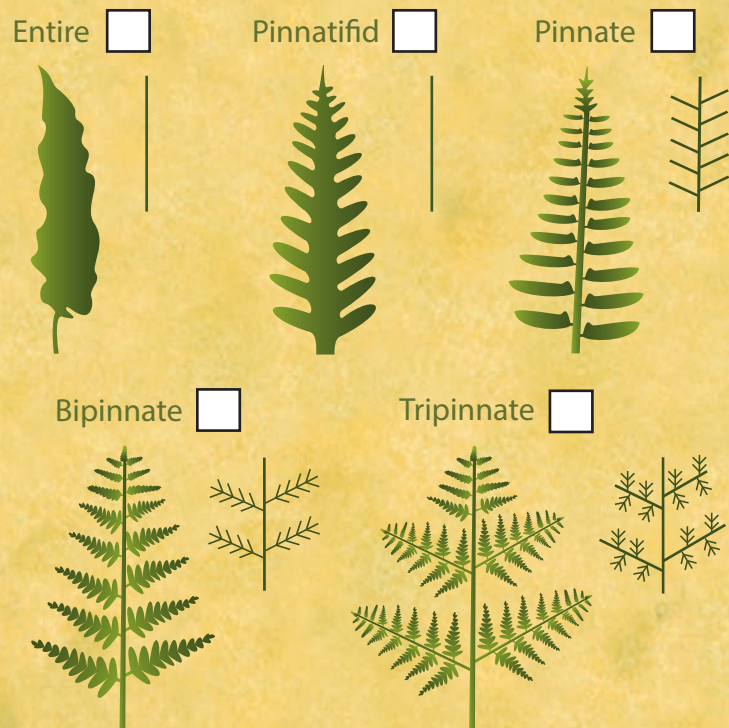
On your hike today, use this guide to identify some of the various ferns that call the forest home. Start with the 'Fern Parts' section to learn more about how to identify a fern.

Fern TRACKER

At a glance, many ferns look alike. But if you take a second look, these beautiful plants provide clues to help you identify them. Use the activity on the right to see how many you can find!

Fern Forms

The **blade**, or leaf of a fern can be found in five major forms. Look at how the blade splits into leaflets. How many blade forms can you find?



Spores Not Seeds

Most plants use seeds to reproduce, but ferns use single cells called **spores**. Depending on the fern species, spore-producing objects called **sori** are found on either fronds or stalks. Some spores that are released and find moist ground will germinate. Can you find sori on a fern? _____



Leaflet with sori

Lady Fern ☐

(*Athyrium filix-femina*)

Are the fronds light green, bipinnate (appearing almost tripinnate), and tapered at both ends? Do the leaflets have finely toothed feathery edges? Is the stem green to reddish and smooth, without scales or hairs?



2-5 ft. tall



Licorice Fern ☐

(*Polypodium glycyrrhiza*)

Are the fronds evergreen, leathery, and pinnatifid? Do they grow directly from moss-covered logs, rocks, or trees? Is there a red creeping rhizome visible at the base?



4-24 in. tall



Western Maidenhair Fern ☐

(*Adiantum aleuticum*)

Are the fronds fan-shaped, pinnate, and divided like delicate fingers? Do black, wiry stems support the fronds? Do the fronds radiate in a circular, umbrella-like pattern?



4-30 in. tall



Giant Chain Fern ☐

(*Woodwardia fimbriata*)

Are the fronds very large—often over 4 feet long? Do the leaflets have toothed edges and deep lobes? Are the sori (spore clusters) long and chain-like underneath?



3-5 ft. tall

