

B-35: A herbarium survey of pteridophytes of Sri Lanka

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The Pteridophyta are one of the least studied groups of plants in Sri Lanka. The present study explores the herbarium collections of all the ferns and their allies to determine (a) the localities from which they were collected (b) the species that have not been collected recently and (c) the last recorded localities of rare ferns. This a preliminary survey to provide information to the botanists involved in the taxonomic revision of Sri Lankan Pteridophytes. During the survey, all the specimens of pteridophytes deposited at the National Herbarium, Peradeniya, were studied,

recording the information given in the label of each specimen. Information gathered was fed to a computer database. There were 2117 specimens in the Herbarium representing 323 species belonging to 94 genera and 26 families. Of these, 7 genera had not been recollected in this century. Of 314 indigenous species recorded by Sledge (1982), 13 were not represented in the herbarium. Of the 58 endemic species 20 were re-collected during the last 25 years and 12 had not been re-collected at all. The highest number of specimens were from the wet zone (60%) followed by the montane zone (21%), intermediate zone (12%) and dry zone (6%). The absence of some species in the herbarium suggests that either they are very rare or were overlooked by collectors.