

Hart's-tongue Fern

Asplenium scolopendrium

Plants · Evergreen fern



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An evergreen fern quite unlike the others, with glossy, bright green, undivided strap-shaped fronds with heart-shaped bases and wavy margins, growing in a shuttlecock rosette. Hart's-tongue grows in damp shaded places — walls, banks, wells, woodland and shady lanes — around Dumfries, and favours lime-rich mortar and rock.

BEHAVIOUR

The undersides carry the spores in long parallel brown stripes running out at an angle from the midrib like the rungs of a ladder — the scolopendrium of its name likens them to a centipede's legs. Being evergreen, it is one of the few green things in a shaded lane in January. It colonises old mortared walls and drain shafts readily and can grow in deep shade.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Spleenworts (Aspleniaceae)
FROND	20–60 cm, undivided and strap-shaped
STATUS	Native; common on shaded lime-rich walls and banks

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