

# *Platycerium bifurcatum*



## ***Platycerium bifurcatum***: Elkhorn

Family: *Polypodiaceae*

Genus: *Platycerium* from Greek *platys* 'broad, wide' and *keras* 'a horn', in reference to the shape of the fertile frond.

Species: *bifurcatum* from Latin *bi*, 'two', *furcatus*, 'forked'

This is usually an epiphytic fern. The sterile or nest fronds are kidney shaped, embracing the host to form a humus collecting bowl behind the new fronds. The long fertile fronds are erect to arching, wedge shaped and forking at least 3 times. Sori form mats on most of the underside of the lobes. The roots of the elkhorn form proliferous buds towards the outer margin of the nest leaves, each bud developing into a new fern. In this way a colony is formed which may eventually surround the host tree. These ferns are easy to grow and can be quite stunning. They resent dense shade, liking lots of filtered light and protection from drying wind. They like some humidity with watering to keep the humus bowl damp but not so wet that it rots.



Spore mass

*Flora of Australia* Volume 48: Ferns, Gymnosperms and Allied Groups,  
*Australian Ferns: Growing them Successfully* by Calder Chaffey,  
*A Field Guide to Australian Ferns: Volume 1* by Calder Chaffey.