



**Edinburgh University**  
**Preliminary Report**  
**Estimating the status of endemic flora of Ascension Island**

From the 9th July to the 26th of August the endemic plants of Ascension Island were surveyed by the Edinburgh University Ascension 98 Team. Every historical site was visited and notes on the appearance or absence of species were taken. Of the 10 endemic species 6 were found by the team. Quadrat data was collected on each of the species (still to be analyzed), schematic maps of each site were drawn, photographs of site and species were taken and a habitat map of the main vegetation on the weather side of Green Mountain was also prepared. Representative soil samples were also collected from each of the sites where data was collected. Permanent quadrats for 5 of the endemic species were set up to provide data for comparative studies in the future. Fixed point photography sites were set up to record the fixed quadrats. Photographs were also taken of species that occur locally for inclusion in a locally published flora.

Links with the local community were established through the school, the newspaper and the Ascension Island Historical Society. With the local school we organised an activity day with the children under the age of ten where the local plants were introduced to them by a number of games and activities. A nature ramble was also organised to show the older children some of the plants on Green Mountain by walking round Elliot's Pass. Another walk was also organised to talk adults round the same route introducing them to some of the endemic species that occur on the pass. An article on our work was also published in the local newspaper The Islander. In conjunction with the Historical Society an evening talk was also organised on what the team had achieved on the visit it included a slide show and discussion on the conservation of the endemics. A questionnaire was designed to investigate any possible local uses of the flora and whether or not locals were aware of the proposed management plan. This was published in the Islander newspaper and also individuals were asked to fill it in.

## Appendix

Summary of the status of Ascension Islands endemic vascular plants 1998

### *Oldenlandia adscensionis*

Not seen since 1889  
Report of sighting in 1986 unconfirmed  
May still persist. Germinates after heavy rain  
Occurred mostly on Green Mountain

### *Dryopteris ascensionis*

Not seen since 1889  
Report of sighting 1975 unconfirmed  
As above may still persist on Green Mountain

### *Sporobolus durus*

Not seen since 1889  
May persist  
Occurred on the lee side of Weather Post

### *Anogramma ascensionis*

Not seen since 1958  
May persist on Green Mountain

### *Euphorbia origanoides*

Extant.  
Has sporadic distribution around the island, some sites only seed found, others no plants or seed found but may still persist at these sites.

### *Sporobolus caespitosus*

Extant.  
Very localised on Elliot's Pass on the Weather side of Green Mountain  
Approx 300 plants found.

### *Asplenium ascensionis*

Extant.  
Wide distribution over Green Mountain. On dark damp crevices, often vertical cliffs. No longer a member of ground vegetation.

### *Xiphopteris ascensionense*

Extant.  
On bamboo nodes amongst mosses on stem at dew pond Green Mountain and Weather side of Green Mountain with *S. caespitosus*.

### *Pteris adscensionis*

Extant.  
Very localised distribution, Cricket valley and Breakneck Valley 4 or 5 populations, approx 100 plants were found.

### *Marattia purpurascens*

Extant.  
Weather side of Green Mountain and at Dewpond amongst the bamboo, able to compete because of large size, relatively stable populations.