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A revision of the fern genus *Dryopteris* (Dryopteridaceae) in sub-Saharan Africa

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Abstract

The morphology of the *Dryopteris* species occurring in sub-Saharan Africa is discussed. This is followed by a revision of the genus in this region, and the Cape Verde Islands in the Gulf of Guinea. Twenty-six species are recognised for the region.

Introduction

Dryopteris Adanson (1763: 551) is a genus of between 225 and 230 species (Kramer 1990: 110, Fraser-Jenkins 2006: 105) with a nearly worldwide distribution. *Dryopteris* is less common in the southern hemisphere and nearly absent from Australia and New Zealand. The chief centre of diversity is the Sino-Himalayan region and southwestern China, with minor centres of divergence in Southeast and East Asia, Pacific Islands, Africa, Europe and the Americas. Sessa *et al*. (2012) infer that the ancestors of *Dryopteris* and its sister genus *Arachniodes* Blume (1828: 241, 242) diverged ca. 63 million years ago, and that the *Dryopteris* lineage at that point was confined to Asia.