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**Unit:** I

**Module Name:** Classification of Pteridophytes

**Module No:** 02

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**Notes:**

#### **Introduction**

- Pteridophytes constitute a significant and important group in the plant kingdoms as the first true land plants.
- Pteridophytes are the seedless vascular plants belong to the cryptogams known as ***spore bearing vascular plants***.
- Pteridophytes occupy a transitional position between bryophytes and spermatophytes.

#### **Classification by Smith (1955)**

#### **Division I: Psilophyta /Psilopsida**

1. The plant body is a rootless sporophyte that differentiates into a subterranean rhizome and an aerial erect shoot.
2. Branching is dichotomous in both subterranean rhizome and aerial shoot.
3. Rhizoids borne on the rhizome absorb water and nutrients from the soil.
4. Leaves often absent or if present, they are spirally arranged scale like ( e.g. *Psilotum*) or leaf-like appendages (e.g. *Tmesipteris*) are borne
5. The vascular tissue is of primitive type i.e., simple, cylindrical protostele with annular or spiral tracheids.
6. Secondary growth is absent.
7. Sporangia are borne at the apex of the aerial shoots. They are either solitary (e.g., *Rhynia*) or in groups and terminal in position. There was nothing like that of sporophyll.
8. Sporangia always bearing the same type of spores i.e., they are homosporous
9. The gametophyte is known only in *Psilotum* and *Tmesipteris* (living genera) while unknown in Psilophytales.

10. The gametophyte is cylindrical or branched, subterranean and colourless.
11. Sex organs are partially embedded in the prothallus.
12. Antherozoids are spirally coiled and multi-flagellated.

**Eg. *Psilotum***

#### **Division II: Lepidophyta / Lycophyta/ Lycopsida/ Lycopodophyta**

1. The plant body is sporophytic and can be differentiated into root, stem and leaves.
2. The leaves are small (microphyllous), simple with a single mid vein. They are usually spirally arranged, sometimes in opposite fashion and or even in whorls.
3. In some cases the leaves are ligulate (e.g., *Selaginella*, *Isoetes*). The ligule is present at the base of each leaf.
4. The vascular tissue may be either in the form of plectostele, siphonostele or sometimes even polystele. Leaf gaps are absent.
5. Sporophylls are loosely arranged or aggregated to form strobilus or cones.
6. Some members are homosporous (e.g. *Lycopodium*) while others are heterosporous (e.g. *Selaginella*).
7. Antherozoids are biflagellate or multi-flagellate.
8. Secondary growth does not take place except in *Isoetes*
  - It includes both fossil (e.g., *Lepidodendron*) and living Pteridophytes (five living genera e.g., *Lycopodium*, *Phylloglossum*, *Isoetes*, *Stylites* and *Selaginella*)

#### **Division III: Calamophyta / Sphenophyta/ Sphenopsida/ Arthrophyta**

1. The plant body is sporophytic and can be differentiated into root, stem and leaves.
2. The stem in majority of the forms is long, jointed or articulated and is ribbed i.e., having ridges and grooves. Stem is divisible into nodes and internodes and is developed as upright aerial branches from the underground creeping rhizome.
3. Leaves are thin, small, scaly brown and are arranged in transverse whorls at the nodes of the aerial branches.
4. Branches also develop in whorls from the axil of the scaly leaves
5. As the foliage leaves are reduced to scales, the process of photosynthesis is taken up by the stem and hence it becomes green.
6. The stem has a solid protostele (e.g., *Sphenophyllum*) or medullated protostele (e.g., *Equisetum*).
7. The sporangia are borne on specialized appendages called sporangiophores (the whole structure resembling but not homologous with a strobilus)
  - **Division III: Calamophyta / Sphenophyta/ Sphenopsida/ Arthrophyta**  
**Eg. *Equisetum***

8. Sporangia are developed at the apex of the fertile branches in whorls forming compact cone.
  9. Most of the members are homosporous but some fossil forms are heterosporous (e.g., *Catamites*).
  10. Gametophytes (prothalli) may be monoecious or dioecious. Gametophytes are exosporic and green.
  11. Antherozoids are large and multi-flagellate.
  12. The embryo is without suspensor and is exoscopic in nature.
- It includes both fossil plants (e.g., *Calamophyton*, *Sphenophyllum*) as well as living plants (e.g., *Equisetum*). It is represented by one living genus *Equisetum* and about 18 extinct forms.

#### **Division IV: Pterophyta / Pteropsida/ Filicophyta**

1. They occur in all types of habitats. Majority of the ferns are terrestrial and prefer to grow in moist and shady places.
  - Some are aquatic (e.g., *Azolla*, *Salvinia*, *Marsilea*),
  - xerophytic (e.g., *Adiantum emarginatum*),
  - epiphytic (e.g., *Asplenium nidus*),
  - halophytic (e.g., *Acrostichum aureum*) or
  - climbing (e.g., *Stenochlaena*).
2. Majority of the members (except some tree ferns (e.g., *Angiopteris*) have short and stout rhizome. The rhizome may be creeping, upright or growing above the soil.
3. Leaves are large, may be
  - simple (e.g., *Ophioglossum*) or
  - pinnately compound (majority of the ferns for example, *Pteridium*, *Marsilea*, *Adiantum* etc.) and described as fronds. Young fronds are circinate coiled.
4. Leaves are ex-stipulate (e.g., Filicales) while stipulate in some other groups.
5. The vascular cylinder varies from a protostele to a complicated type of siphonostele. Solenostele, dictyostele and polystele are also found.
6. Vegetative reproduction takes place by fragmentation (e.g., *Adiantum*, *Pteridium*), stem tubers e.g., *Marsilea*, adventitious buds (e.g., *Asplenium bulbiferum*) or by apogamy (e.g., *Marsilea*).
7. Sporangia arise from placenta (a swollen cushion of cells) in groups (sori).
8. Sori develop on the margins or abaxial surface of the leaves (sporophylls) or leaflets.
9. Sori are protected by true (e.g. *Marsilea*) or false indusium (e.g. *Adiantum*, *Pteris*)
10. The sporangial development may be leptosporangiate (e.g., *Osmunda*) or eusporangiate type (e.g., *Ophioglossum*).

11. The sporangia in most cases have a distinct annulus and stomium.
  12. Members may be homosporous (e.g., *Pteris*, *Adiantum* etc.) or heterosporous (e.g., *Marsilea*, *Azolla*, *Salvinia* etc.).
  13. The gametophyte may be exosporic or endosporic.
  14. Antheridia and archegonia are partially or completely embedded in the gametophyte. Antherozoids are multi-flagellated.
  15. Embryogeny largely endoscopic. Embryo may or may not have suspensor.
- It includes the plants which are commonly known as 'ferns'. It is represented by about 300 genera and more than 10000 species.