Cyathea cooperi (Hook. ex F. Muell.) Domin

The Australian tree fern Cyathea cooperi is native to Queensland, Australia. It has been introduced outside its native range as an ornamental plant. It has escaped cultivation in some of its introduced range and is reported as invasive.

The native habitat for C. cooperi is in gullies and rainforests. It can also be found along roadsides and stream courses above the permanent waterline. C. cooperi is somewhat tolerant of dry conditions but is found most in wet sites. These wet sites are usually where there is ground. This species likes loam, clay loam, and sand soils.

The fast growing fern spreads its spores very easily by wind and proceeds to grow within a few weeks. It can grow up to 12m high and its fronds can grow up to 5m long.

C. cooperi is listed as one of several ornamental invasive plants rated as highly invasive and a threat to mountain forests on Reunion. Reunion is the last of the Mascarene Archipelago with large areas of untransformed mountain forests. In Hawaii C. cooperi has displaced two native species of Cyathea, C. excelsa and C. bourbonica in native rainforests and headlands where it forms dense monotypic stands.

Sawing the trunk at ground level, or leaving a thigh high stump that won’t become a trip hazard is a suggested way of controlling the spread of C. cooperi.

References: