

# Nutrition of local wild edible fern (*Diplazium esculentum*) leaves

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## Nutrition of local wild edible fern (*Diplazium esculentum*) leaves

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**Abstract.** Vegetable fern species distributed throughout the world are diverse, but there is a lack of scientific data about the nutritional content of local vegetable ferns. This study aimed to provide preliminary data of *Diplazium esculentum* nutrition obtained from Bone Bolango District, Gorontalo area, Indonesia, in order to support the developing of pharmaceutical and mixed animal feed products. Tests for the proximate characteristics of leaf extracts and the phytochemical analysis were carried out through qualitative screening following Indonesian National Standard (SNI) Method year 2006, while the detail amino acid compound analyzed using Gas Chromatography Mass Spectrometry (GCMS) method. The results showed that *D. esculentum* from Gorontalo Land is rich with proteins and amino acids. The amount of protein and fat is detected as  $21.52 \pm 2.70\%$  and  $2.47 \pm 0.97\%$  respectively. The fern also contains complete secondary metabolites in the form of alkaloids, saponins, tannins, phenolics, flavonoids, triterpenoids, steroids, and glycosides with a high amount.

### 1. Introduction

Ferns are a group of simplicia commonly used as vegetables by Southeast Asia and Islands in the Pacific Ocean residents [1]. It is common to plant ferns that can be consumed or used medicinally [2]. *Diplazium esculentum* (Retz.) Sw. or 'Dheki Shak' is used as an edible leaf for local communities of parts of West Bengal [3]. In Indonesia, ferns are available in almost every region. The high availability of wild ferns on the mainland of Gorontalo indicates the characteristics of the Gorontalo environment to match the plant's growth habitat. However, the utilization of vegetable ferns in Gorontalo is not optimal yet.

Vegetable fern species spreading throughout the world is diverse, reaching 400 species [4]. However, scientific data on the nutritional content of vegetable ferns that live in the tropics, especially in the Gorontalo area, are not provided. In several areas, the results of phytochemical screening of some species of *Taenitis blechnoides*, *Pityrogramma calomelanos*, *Adiantum latifolium*, *Cheilosoria tenuifolia*, *Vittaria ensiformis* contain chemical compounds saponins and steroids. Also, the types of *Vittaria graminifolia* contains alkaloids, flavonoids, and tannins. Moreover, *Pteris vittata* contains terpenoids [5].

While studies on the nutritional and phytochemical aspects of edible ferns are common, but in such elements, the least exploration is to species *D. esculentum*. Preliminary identification of the proximate

content and phytochemical characteristics of this species in the Gorontalo area can underlie the development of pharmaceutical products, food diversification, and mixed animal feed cultivation.

## 2. Materials and methods

The leaves of the *D. esculentum* samples obtained from Tingkohubu Timur Village, Suwawa Sub-district, Bone Bolango District, Gorontalo (Altitude 26 m MSL, N 0°31'41".5452"; E 123°8'57.3756") were washed with running water to remove the inherent contaminants. The leaves are dried to prevent damage, microbial contamination, and are durable to store for a long time. Suitable dry *Simplicia* was selected, weighed, and stored in a closed container.

The vegetable ferns isolation was carried out by maceration. In order to obtain crude extract, the dry *Simplicia* was extracted using 80% methanol and three 24-hour soaks. Methanol extract was created by filtering the extracted solution and using a rotary evaporator to evaporate it.

Analysis of the proximate composition of samples was carried out at the Fisheries Product Quality Testing and Development Centre, Gorontalo. The characteristic of water, ash content, alcohol soluble extract, protein, and fat follow Indonesian National Standard (SNI) 2006, while the qualitative phytochemical screening of the extraction was done at the Agency for Agricultural Research and Development's Laboratory of Spice and Medicinal Crops Research Institute in Bogor, Indonesia. The following reagents were used in the phytochemical screening: **Alkaloids test:** Dragendorff's reagent contained two grams of extract. The presence of alkaloids was discovered by the production of an orange precipitate when Dragendorff's reagent was added. **Saponins test:** A few drops of HCl were added after two grams of the extract had been treated with two milliliters of hot water and stirred. The result with the permanent foam was good. **Tannin test:** Two grams of extract were treated with FeCl [3]. The presence of tannins was revealed by the production of a blackish green hue. **Phenolic test:** Two grams of the extract were added FeCl [3]. The development of a blue-black hue served as a sign of polyphenol presence. **Flavonoids test:** The filtrate was added concentrated HCl solution and then heated. The color changes to yellowish-green indicated the presence of Flavonoids. **Triterpenoid test:** Two drops of anhydrous acetic acid were added in 1 gram of extract, which had been dissolved in 2 ml of chloroform. This mixture was pressed with H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>. The formation of brownish or violet rings indicates the presence of a triterpenoid. **Steroids test:** 2 ml of chloroform was added to 5 grams of sample. The red color is formed when dripping concentrated H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> indicated the presence of Steroids. **Glycoside test:** The examination of glycosides was carried out with the Lieberman-Buchard reaction. The extract was diluted in 5 mL of acetic anhydride before being put in H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>. The presence of glycosides was shown by the development of blue or green.

The Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry (GCMS) method was used for additional testing to determine the constituent chemicals for each type of amino acid. A liquid extract of fern leaf was injected into the GCMS injector (inlet) of 1 µL. The analysis took place according to the temperature program specified in the Standard Instrument Control Parameters, which was 60°C for 10 min, then 7°C / min to 300°C for 36 min in 80.286 minutes run time.

## 3. Results and discussion

After conducting this research it is discovered that the identification of the proximate contents of *D. esculentum* leaves extract presented in Table 1 to show that this vegetable species has a variety of minerals, proteins, and fats. Further testing through phytochemical tests (Table 2) and the detail compounds (Table 3) indicate that *D. esculentum* leaves contain a complete amino acid composition.

**Table 1.** Proximate extract of vegetable fern, *D. esculentum*, leaves

No	Proximate Composition	Amount (%)
1	Water	16.16 ± 0.69
2	Total Ash	2.67 ± 0.79
3	Acid insoluble ash	2.83 ± 0.05
4	Alcohol soluble extract	27.46 ± 4.82
5	Protein	21.52 ± 2.70
6	Fat	2.47 ± 0.97

In general, all the samples were analysed for higher proximate content. Variations in the results of testing the proximate content of the species *D. esculentum* obtained from different locations indicate that habitat factors determine the proximate content. Multiple nutrients are needed by plants, and they typically get them from the soil solution [6].

**Table 2.** Phytochemical test of vegetable fern, *D. esculentum*, leaves

No	Amino acids	The screening test from replication			
		1	2	3	4
1	Alkaloids	+	+	+	+
2	Saponins	+	+	+	+
3	Tannins	+	+	+	+
4	Phenolic	-	+	+	+
5	Flavonoids	+	+	+	+
6	Triterpenoids	+	+	+	+
7	Steroids	+	+	+	+
8	Glycosides	+	+	+	+

(+: present) (-: absent/undetected)

**Table 3.** Compounds of the identified amino acids of vegetable fern, *D. esculentum*, leaves

No	Compounds	Amino Acids	PCT Area
1	Tetrahydroxycyclo Hexane Carboxylic Acid	Tannins	8.6658
2	gamma,-Sitosterol,807596,000083-47-6,99	Steroids	7.8705
3	Neophytadiene,460917,000504-96-1,99	Steroids	6.7438
4	decahydrobenzo	Saponins	4.3542
5	Decahydiberzo-	Saponins	4.3541
6	Hexadecanoic acid	Alkaloids	4.2542
7	1,4-Benzenediol	Flavonoids	3.5192
8	5-Hydroxymethylfurfural	Glycosides	3.4544
9	n- Hexadecanoic acid	Alkaloids	2.9183
10	Phytol	Tripernoids	2.9183
11	1,2-Benzenediol	Flavonoids	1.9802
12	Phenol	Phenolic	1.9071
13	2- Hexadecen-1-ol, 3,7,11,15- tetramethyl-, [R-[R <sup>o</sup> -(E)]]-	Alkaloids	1.7814
14	Benzeneethanol, 4-hydroxy-	Tannins	1.7387
15	2-Pentadecanone, 6,10,14-trimethyl	Tannins	1.6919
16	BETA.-D4-HEXAMETHYLENEOXIDE,	Tripernoids	1.6027
17	Trisilane	Phenolic	1.5893
18	2,5-Dimethylfuran-3,4(2H,5H)-dione	Phenolic	1.3539
19	(3methyl,24R)-ergost-5-en-3-ol	Glycosides	1.3041
20	Tetrahydroxycyclo Hexane Carboxylic Acid	Alkaloids	1.264
21	3-Ethylthio-1-propene	Tannins	1.2591

22	“11,13-Dimethyl-12-tetradecen-1-ol acetate”	Triterpenoids	1.2568
23	Protoanemonine	Phenolic	1.1799
24	6-trimethyloctanal	Saponins	1.1789
25	-4-2,(but-2-enylidene)-3	Saponins	1.1711
26	Benzo[b]cyclopropa[1m]fluorenone	Glycosides	1.1676
27	1,2-O-(1-METHYLETHYLIDENE) HEXOFURANOSE	Glycosides	1.1411
28	3-Penten-2-one,4-methyl-	Phenolic	1.0613
29	Carbonic acid-2	Saponins	1.0359
30	Cycloheptanone, 19599,000502-42-1,42	Steroids	1.0053
31	3,7,11,15-Tetramethyl-2-hexadecen-1-ol	Tannins	0.9669
32	Catechol	Glycosides	0.9536
33	2-Furanmethanol	Phenolic	0.9047
34	2,2-Dimethyl-6-methoxynaphtho [1,2-b]pyran	Flavonoids	0.8978
35	Quinoline,1,2,3,4-tetrahydro-1-((2-phenylcyclopropyl)sulfonyl-,trans-	Tannins	0.8935
36	Tetrahydroxycyclo Hexane Carboxylic Acid	Alkaloids	0.8698
37	Tetrahydroxycyclo Hexane Carboxylic Acid	Alkaloids	0.822
38	Stigman-3, 5-Diene	Flavonoids	0.8036
39	4H-Pyran-4-one,2,3-dihydro-3,5-dihydroxy-6-methyl-	Flavonoids	0.7662
40	n- Hexadecanoic acid	Alkaloids	0.7095
41	1,6-diethylamin0-2-(3,4-dimethoxyphenyl)-7-methoxynaphthalene	Glycosides	0.6325
42	“Butane,1-(ethenylthio)”	Triterpenoids	0.5937
43	“S-[2-[N,N-Dimethylamino]ethyl]N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl thiocarbohydroximate”	Triterpenoids	0.5796
44	Cyclopropanecarboxylic acid, 2-methylene-, methyl ester”, 18861,088787-23-9,1	Steroids	0.5697
45	Stigmast-4-En-3-One	Flavonoids	0.5317
46	Cycloheptanone, 19597,000502-42-1,25	Steroids	0.5131
47	Diglycerol, 109127,000627-82-7,32	Steroids	0.5094
48	Vitamin E	Vitamin E	0.4473
49	14.alpha.-Cheilanth-12-enic Methyl Ester,	Triterpenoids	0.3608
50	blithyaldehyde	Saponins	0.0525

*D. esculentum* extract is high in water content seen in this study ( $16.16 \pm 0.69\%$ ). Drying eliminates the water from plant tissues, making it simpler to measure the various plant components [7].

Oven-dried plant samples from Los Angeles, Laguna, Philippines contain  $17.39 \pm 0.82\%$  ash [7]. Moreover, samples from Sikkim include  $16.2 \pm 0.7\%$  ash [8]. These values are higher than the total ash content from this research ( $2.67 \pm 0.79\%$ ).

The acid-insoluble ash content in the current study ( $2.83 \pm 0.05\%$ ) was high compared to the samples of *D. esculentum* from Sikkim, the Himalayas containing 1.33% ash [9]. Additionally, fresh plant samples from Wet Market of the Municipality of Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines, contain  $1.42 \pm 0.10\%$  ash [7].

The content of the soluble alcoholic extract of *D. esculentum* in this study was higher ( $27.46 \pm 4.82$ ) than this of soluble ethanol extract of the Girimukti Mountains Singajaya District, Garut Regency, West Java Province which amounted to only 13.82% [10]. There are contained amounts of protein in ferns in the current study.



The content was estimated at  $21.52 \pm 2.70\%$ . These values were lower than the protein contents from several previous research. An earlier study on *D. esculentum* from Sikkim, the Himalayas, has protein to be  $31.2 \pm 1.0\%$  [8]. Besides, another report from the district of Assam, India, said contained 34.28% protein for sonicated extraction [11]. Moreover, the oven-dried *D. esculentum* from the wet market of Los Baños contained  $10.67 \pm 0.05\%$  crude protein [7].

*D. esculentum* in this study had a lower amount of fat ( $2.47 \pm 0.97\%$ ) compared to previous studies reported that oven-dried *D. esculentum* from the Municipality of Los Baños wet market contained  $3.40 \pm 0.05\%$  crude fat [7].

Amino acid composition of *D. esculentum* leaf extract obtained from Gorontalo land turned out to show results in harmony with the result of the leaves from Central Kalimantan, Indonesia [12]. Unlike the leaves obtained from Blangkejeren, Aceh, Indonesia, where secondary metabolites of Alkaloids and Flavonoids are not found in the methanol extract of leaves of *D. esculentum* [13]. Alkaloids, terpenoids, steroids, and proteins, and amino acids were absent in the methanol extract from leaves originating from the mainland Ulu Kuang, Perak, Malaysia [14]. The results of the qualitative screening of leaf ethanol extract from the Municipality of Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines samples showed absent Tannin compound [7]. Alkaloids of the fern leaves from Chandraprabha Vanrai in Dapoli, Ratnagiri District of Maharashtra, were absent [14].

The distribution of *D. esculentum* is throughout Asia and Oceania. It is widely used by the village and tribal communities and is known as a vegetable fern [15]. *D. esculentum* is a popular fern that is also used medicinally [16]. Its leaf has traditionally been used to cure headaches, pain, fever, wounds, dysentery, glandular swellings, diarrhea, and a variety of skin problems. It has natural antioxidant, antibacterial, and cytotoxic properties. However, more research is needed to isolate and describe the active chemical elements responsible for the aforementioned effects [17]. benefits of *D. esculentum* vegetable ferns due to the presence of several active compounds they contain.

The nutritional content of *D. esculentum* vegetable foliage extract in the Gorontalo plains has the potential to be developed into fishery products such as natural animal feed formulations. Another fern species, *Cycas revoluta*, has been reported that containing Steroid compounds and began to be developed into a stimulant molting of tiger shrimp [18]. A similar leafy vegetable study reported that artificial diets enriched by spinach extract effectively stimulated soft shell crab production [19]. Nevertheless, more detailed and comprehensive research on the concentration of each nutrient is needed to support the development of this kind of fishery product.

#### 4. Conclusion

The *D. esculentum* from Gorontalo Land has a high protein content and a complete amino acid composition, which has the potential for the creation of medicinal products and the production of mixed animal feed, as may be inferred from the description of the current study.

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