



Exotic Fern Group Pteridology Prize: Competition Criteria 2026

Version 1: Last reviewed and adopted by the Committee on 22 December 2025.

The public version of Exotic Fern Group Pteridology Prize information will available at <https://exoticferngroup.org/prize> from 1 February 2026.

Call for 2026 submissions

The Exotic Fern Group Pteridology Prize aims to promote emerging botanists, conservationists and horticulturists working with ferns who have a passion for writing and communication. The competition is open to amateurs, students and professionals, with no restrictions on nationality or place of residence. The winning entry will receive £1000.

We welcome submissions of essays, reports or academic papers. Your submission needs to be enlightening, informative and engaging to read, and must celebrate an element of the EFG community mission. Important elements of your writing are analysis, context and perspective, helping the reader to explore and understand the wider implications of your chosen topic.

Abstracts or summaries must be received by 1 April 2026.

Competition criteria 2026

1. There must be a clear connection between the work and the EFG community mission:
 - a. **Connect:** create a safe, open and worldwide community for people passionate about tropical, subtropical and indoor ferns.
 - b. **Learn:** develop resources to help people explore their passion, with an ethos of sharing expertise.
 - c. **Grow:** research horticultural practice and improve techniques for growing and propagating ferns.
 - d. **Conserve:** support exotic fern stocks in public glasshouses and the hobby, promoting an ethical approach to acquiring new accessions.
 - e. **Document:** record and document accession lists. Collect and share horticultural practice and knowledge.
 - f. **Diversify:** expand the species of ferns in cultivation. Encourage public glasshouses and hobbyists to curate specialised collections.
2. The work must be unpublished, and candidates must agree to publication by the EFG.
3. Candidates must be members of EFG and therefore over 18 at the time of submission. There is no cost to join.
4. Details of the winners and runners-up will be publicly available.
5. Joint submissions are allowed but one lead author, who is the point of contact, must be identified to the Organising Secretary at the beginning of the submission process. If the winning submission has multiple authors, the prize will be paid to the lead author only.
6. Entries must follow EFG Submission Guidelines.

How to enter

We must receive abstracts and summaries by email before 23:59 BST on 1 April 2026. You will receive notification if your work has been accepted into the competition by 14 April 2026. Completed submissions will then need to be submitted by email before 23:59 BST on 1 July 2026.

If you are an employee or student and your submission is wholly or partly the result of your employment or coursework, you should ask whether your employer or College will allow you to enter the competition, especially as the EFG will publish the winning submission. If you are allowed, then detail what acknowledgement they would require on the submission.

Submissions must be in English. Candidates can submit video presentations with permission.

Submission process

1. Candidates should register their interest in making a submission with the Organising Secretary who will provide them with the Competition Criteria and the EFG Submission Guidelines on how their work should be prepared and submitted. Candidates will need to acknowledge that they have received and understood the Competition Criteria and Submission Guidelines.
2. Candidates can discuss their application with the Organising Secretary when registering their interest or at any stage of the submission process.
3. Submissions must include a valid email address and a short biography of the authors.
4. If a candidate is submitting work involving media and resources other than the written word, an agreement of how the work should be presented will need to be made with the Organising Secretary and the candidate will be notified of any necessary modifications to the judging criteria.
5. Plagiarism checks will be made on shortlisted and final submissions (Stages Two and Three).
6. Stage One (abstract acceptance): candidates will first submit an abstract or summary of their work. If this is accepted by the Judging Panel, then candidates will move into Stage Two and they will be eligible to submit their completed work. Unsuccessful candidates can request feedback. Successful candidates may be given feedback to consider before completing Stage Two.
7. Stage Two (shortlisting): completed submissions will be shortlisted. Unsuccessful candidates can request feedback. The panel may ask shortlisted candidates to revisit their work, and consider changes, prior to final submission.
8. Stage Three (final award): shortlisted candidates submit their final work and these are judged by the full Judging Panel.
9. A record will be kept by the Organising Secretary of the events surrounding a submission, the findings of the Judging Panel, and the final outcome. This will be kept for three years.

Timeline

- Stage One Deadline 1 April 2026
- Stage One Results Notification 14 April 2026
- Stage Two Deadline 1 July 2026
- Stage Two Results Notification 14 August 2026
- Stage Three Deadline 1 September 2026
- Stage Three Results Notification 31 October 2026
- Publication of Results 1 November 2026
- Publication of Winning Article(s) 1 December 2026

Judging Panel

1. The Judging Panel is:
 - a. Dr Alan Jones (Norwich, United Kingdom)
 - b. Dr Peter Blake (Norwich, United Kingdom)
 - c. Alice Taylor (Royal Botanic Garden, Kew, United Kingdom)
 - d. Luigi Leoni (Cambridge University Botanic Garden, United Kingdom)

2. The Judging Panel will have the right to seek specialist advice if necessary.
3. Matthew Reeve will be the Organising Secretary and the point of contact for candidates and submissions. The Organising Secretary is not part of the Judging Panel. The Organising Secretary can be contacted by emailing prize@exoticferngroup.org.

Stage One judging criteria

1. Does it fulfil the Competition Criteria?
2. Does it fulfil the Submission Guidelines for abstracts and summaries?

Notification procedure Stage One

1. Candidates will be notified by email on the Stage One Results Notification date.
2. Candidates are able to ask for feedback if they are unsuccessful.
3. Candidates are fully eligible to resubmit the following year.

Stage Two and Stage Three judging criteria

1. Does it fulfil the Competition Criteria?
2. Does it fulfil the Submission Guidelines?
3. If a candidate is submitting work involving media and resources other than the written word, does it fulfil any modifications made to the Competition Criteria as agreed with the Organising Secretary.
4. Did the candidate take on board any feedback given during the submission process?

Notification procedure Stage Two

1. Candidates will be notified by email on the Stage Two Results Notification date.
2. Candidates are able to ask for feedback if they are unsuccessful.
3. Candidates are fully eligible to resubmit the following year.
4. Candidates are fully eligible to submit their work for consideration of publication in the EFG journal, independent of the competition.

Notification procedure Stage Three

1. Candidates will be notified by email on the Results Notification date.
2. The result will be published on social media the following day.
3. The successful candidates' work will be published online and included in the EFG Winter Newsletter.
4. The winning work will be published in the next edition of the EFG journal (*The Glasshouse: The Journal of the Exotic Fern Group*).
5. Candidates are able to ask for feedback if they are unsuccessful.
6. Candidates are fully eligible to resubmit the following year.
7. Candidates are fully eligible to submit their work for consideration of publication in the EFG journal, independent of the competition.
8. A panel of judges will decide on the best submission and reserve the right to make no award, one award of £1000 or two awards of £500 in the event of a tied result.

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