Ferns, or Polypodiopsida Cronquist, Takht., & W.Zimm., are a class of fern allies. There are known to be over 10,500 to approximately 11,000 species of ferns. They represent 11 orders within four subclasses: Equisetidae, Marattiidae, Ophioglossidae, and Polypodiidae, with the vast majority of species (over 10,300) belonging to the latter. Traditionally, ferns referred to plants from the last three classes, hence an alternative name "monilophytes" was introduced for this group. Ferns in a broad sense constitute about 2% of the total number of contemporary vascular plant species. They are most diverse in the tropical zone in wet habitats and at moderate elevations in mountainous regions.

