

# *Sphenopsida*

The 15 living species of the genus *Equisetum* comprise the plants commonly known as horsetails. *Equisetum* species are vascular plants which reproduce sexually by means of spores which are borne on cones. Hence, they are classified with the other spore-bearing vascular plants, the *Lycophytes* (club mosses), *Psilophytes* (whisk ferns) and *Pterophytes* (true ferns). The genus *Equisetum* is the only remaining representative of the once abundant and diverse subdivision Sphenophytina. Remarkably, *Equisetum* has a history stretching back to the Cretaceous and possibly as far back as the Triassic. As a result, *Equisetum* may perhaps be the oldest living genus of vascular plants.

