

Pteridaceae

Maidenhair Fern Family

Elsewhere 40 genera belong to this family; Nova Scotia has only 2 genera, each with a single representative species. Sterile fronds are branched or unbranched. Stipes bear persistent scales at the bases. Sporangia are clustered in sori, arranged at the margins of pinnae and sometimes covered by the inrolling of the margins.

Key to genera

- A. Sori running together to form a marginal band; plant not branched; sterile frond on separate stipe. *Cryptogramma*
- aa. aa. Sori distinct and short; plant branching at the top; fertile fronds not separate. *Adiantum*

Adiantum L.

Maidenhair Fern.

There are about 200 species of these woodland ferns, found on all continents. Their shining fronds seem to collect beads of moisture when humid. Sori are singly carried on the underside of the pinnule margins, covered by a false indusium of the involute margins.

Adiantum pedatum L.

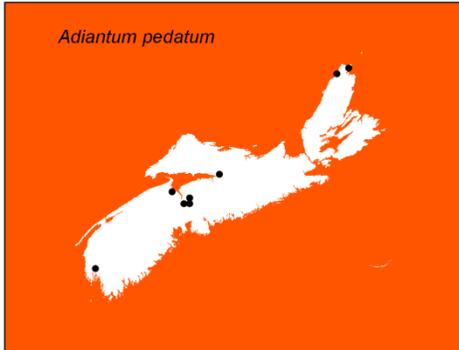
Maidenhair Fern; adiante du Canada



Photo by Sean Blaney

This beautiful and graceful fern, is at the northern edge of its North American distribution in Nova Scotia. Stipes are often purplish and develop from rhizomes, producing small colonies. Stipes branch at the top at least once... Pinnules are borne on short stalks, with the sori aligned on the lower edge of their lobes, covered by the inrolled margins.

Spores produced in summer.



Limited to alkaline soils and oak–birch–sugar maple–elm intervalle forests.

Very few extant collections: Meander River, Hants Co., where it was found in the 1980s. Records exist from Yarmouth, Kings and Victoria counties. Recently discovered along the South Blair River, Inverness Co.

Ranges from NS to ON, south to GA and OK; AK.

***Cryptogramma* R. Br.**

Rock–brake

Rock-brake includes about 10 species of ferns of rocky habitats throughout the northern hemisphere. Typically the fronds are dimorphic and may be evergreen or deciduous. Petioles are weakly ascending and smooth or scaly at the base. Sterile fronds are thin, their rachis green. Distal pinnae are toothed. The fertile fronds exceed the height of the sterile fronds. Their pinnules are entire, the margins revolute forming a false indusium over the sori.

***Cryptogramma stelleri* (Gmel.) Prantl.**

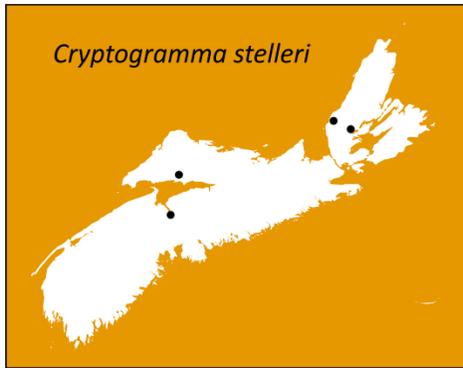
Slender Cliff-brake; cryptogramme de Steller



Photo by David Mazerolle

Slender creeping rhizome gives rise to several fronds scattered along its length. Sterile fronds are thin and weak, on green stipes and with deeply lobed pinnules. The fertile fronds are stiffly erect, above the green fronds with lanceolate or oblong pinnules. Sori run in a continuous band along the margins covered by the inrolled edges.

Spores are produced from late May to September.



Often associated with limestone cliffs and shaded crevices in conglomerates.

Known from the Windsor area, Economy River, Colchester Co. and Inverness County (Hillsboro and Whycomagh).

Elsewhere from NF to ON, south to IL and WVA. In the west from NT to AK south to NV. Asia.

STATUS: ORANGE-listed in NS.