Selaginellaceae
Spikemosses

These ground-dwelling mosslike plants are represented in Nova Scotia by only two species. Low-growing and creeping, they are freely branching, arising on sparse roots. Leaves are simple and sessile, sometimes ending in bristles, arranged in 4–6 ranks along the stems. Sporangia are carried in the leaf axils of the distal portion of the stems. Megaspore and microspores are both produced. Some exotic species are cultivated as houseplants.

Leaves flat; not ending in bristles. *Selaginella selaginoides*

Leaves grooved distally, ending in a bristle. *S. rupestris*

Selaginella rupestris **(L.) Spring**
sélaginelle des rochers

Photo by Roger Lloyd

A much–branched plant forming dense gray–green mats. Close examination is required to separate it from the true mosses. It has bristly overlapping leaves, appressed in a herringbone pattern. Sporophylls form a spike, scarcely separable from the leaves below it.

Found on dry exposed rocks and sand.

Long known from the ledges at the top of Shobels Mountain, Sandy Cove, Digby Co. and east of Centreville on Digby Neck. Thought to be extirpated, but for a recent collection in the same vicinity on Digby Neck.

NS to BC, south to WY, MS and GA; Eurasia.

***Selaginella selaginoides* (L.) Link**
sélaginelle fausse-sélagine

Photo by Roger Lloyd

Prostrate and sparingly branching, this species is easy to miss, blending as it does with the bryophytes around it. The leaves are loosely arranged in four ranks around the stems. Megaspores are produced in the leaf axils of the larger upper leaves. Not a bristly plant.

July and August for spores.

Grows in moist areas such as bog hummocks and streamsides.

Brier Island (Big Meadow) where it is common; west L'Ardoise, Richmond County (rare) and scattered in suitable habitat in northern Cape Breton.

Greenland to AK south to CO, NV and MI, ME in the east. Eurasia.