

Schizaeaceae

Climbing fern family

Family is mostly tropical in distribution, with a single elusive species found in the Maritimes. Hardly resembling a fern, there are both sterile and fertile fronds. The sterile frond is much reduced to a threadlike green blade, so narrow they usually coil at the base of the plant. Fertile fronds rise above the base on slender stipes, with the comb-shaped sporangia at the top.

Schizaea pusilla Pursh

Curly-grass Fern; schizée naine



Photo by David Mazerolle

Generally less than 10cm in height, these plants are difficult to find without a search image.

Spores produced throughout the summer, from July.

Sphagnous wet areas, upper peaty lakeshores and undrained depressions.

Scattered throughout the Atlantic counties and frequent in the northern plateau of Cape Breton.

Elsewhere found in NF, NS, NB, NY and NJ.