

ASPENIUM BRADLEYI D.C. Eaton  
Bradley's Spleenwort

FAMILY: Aspleniaceae (Polypodiaceae)

HABIT: Tufted perennial, fronds evergreen, 0.4-2 dm.; sporulating June- September.

SIMILAR SPECIES: *A. bradleyi* is one of the more distinctive species within the complex of Appalachian spleenworts. However, fronds of all these spleenworts are exceedingly variable and the frequent presence of hybrids within the group adds an air of uncertainty to identification. Determination requires close comparison of typical fronds of these species. *A. bradleyi* often grows in the same habitat as the more frequent *A. pinnatifidum*. The pinnae of *A. bradleyi* are distinctly pinnate, while the pinnae of *A. pinnatifidum* are pinnatifid.

TOTAL RANGE: S. NY and NJ to GA and AL, w. to OH, MO and OK.

STATE RANGE: There are post-1980 collections from Athens, Fairfield, Pike, and Washington counties, and pre-1980 records from Adams and Hocking counties.

HABITAT: Exposed, barren situations, often in full sun, on acidic rocks; crevices, ledges, cliff faces.

HAZARDS: Mechanical disturbance from rock-climbing; overshadowing by woody species.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Probably poor.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Collect complete, mature fronds; avoid overcollecting.

COMMENTS: Bradley's spleenwort seems to be very restricted in Ohio despite the abundance of suitable habitat throughout southeastern Ohio. It should be sought in this region. Perhaps it is overlooked because of its small size and misidentified as other species. Also, its occurrence on cliff faces makes collecting difficult at times.

*A. bradleyi* is believed to be an allopolyploid species derived from *A. montanum* Willd. and *A. platyneuron* (L.) Oakes. Two hybrid spleenworts involving *A. bradleyi* are known to exist, but these have yet to be found in Ohio. They should be sought in the state. These hybrids are: *A. X gravesii* Maxon (*A. bradleyi* X *A. pinnatifidum*) and *A. X wherryi* D.M. Sm. (*A. bradleyi* X *A. montanum*).

SELECTED REFERENCES:

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