

ASPLENIDIUM RUTA-MURARIA L. var. CRYPTOLEPIS (Fernald) Wherry
Wall-rue

FAMILY: Aspleniaceae (Polypodiaceae)

SYNONYMS: *Asplenium cryptolepis* Fernald *Asplenium cryptolepis* Fernald var. *ohionis* Fernald *Asplenium ruta-muraria* L. var. *ohionis* (Fernald) Wherry *Asplenium ruta-muraria* L. var. *subtenuifolium* C. Christens.

HABIT: Tufted perennial, fronds evergreen, 1-6.5 cm.; sporulating June- September.

SIMILAR SPECIES: This is the only Ohio *Asplenium* with a deltoid blade. Other Ohio ferns with such blades do not occur in the same habitat as wall-rue and are much larger and have blades with many more segments than wall-rue.

TOTAL RANGE: MA and VT to n. MI, s. to AL, IL, IA, MO and AR; the typical variety is Eurasian.

STATE RANGE: There are post-1980 collections from 4 counties: Adams, Greene, Highland, and Pike. There is a pre-1980 specimen from Clark County.

HABITAT: Dry to moist, calcareous rock exposures, rarely in full sun.

HAZARDS: Mechanical disturbance from rock-climbing.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown, but possibly good.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Collect complete, mature fronds.

COMMENTS: This distinctive species is not likely to be misidentified, but it may be overlooked because of its small stature. Also, it blends in with its background so completely that the fern can easily escape detection. The habitat for this species is very limited in Ohio, so its state range may be accurately known.

Some authors treat our North American plants as a separate species, *A. cryptolepis*. Plants with lanceolate, long-attenuate segments have been described as a separate variety (see Synonyms) and dubbed the "Ohio Wall-rue." These plants now are generally considered but extreme leaf forms, possibly related to ecological conditions. Intergrades are frequent, especially in the Greene County population. More study is needed to understand the true nature of these variants.

A. ruta-muraria occasionally hybridizes with other spleenworts. Two of these hybrids have been found in Ohio. *A. X clermontae* Syme (*A. ruta-muraria* X *A. trichomanes* L.) grows in Greene County. *A. X inexpectatum* (E.L. Braun) Morton (*A. ruta-muraria* X *A. rhizophyllum* L.) was once found in Adams County.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

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