

# *Ophioglossum pusillum* Raf.

Northern Adder's-tongue

**Family:** Ophioglossaceae

**Synonyms:** *Ophioglossum vulgatum* L. var. *pseudopodium* (S.F. Blake) Farw.

**Description:** 10-35 cm tall, stem upright with one blade, pale green and dull; sporophore arising at ground level.

**Sporolating:** June to August

**Similar Species:** *Ophioglossum pusillum* is very similar to *O. vulgatum*, but can be determined by the following characters: the blade is widest at the middle, tapering to the base, and pale green; basal sheath is membranous and ephemeral; spores are larger and it grows in wet, open habitats.



**Total Range: USA:** AK, CA, CT, DC, DE, IA, IL, IN, KY, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, MT, NC, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NY, OH, OR, PA, RI, SD, VA, VT, WA, WI, WV, WY. **CAN:** BC, MB, NB, NS, ON, PE, QC.

**Ohio Range:** Cuyahoga, Erie, Huron, Lake, Lucas, Portage, Williams.

**Ohio Status:** [www.ohiodnr.com/dnap](http://www.ohiodnr.com/dnap)

**Habitats:** Wetland habitats such as wet meadows, fens, and ditches.

**Threats:** Changes to hydrology, invasive species, and loss of habitat.

**Conservation Potential:** This species has been collected from a wide range of wetland habitats in northern Ohio. It appears to tolerate moderate disturbances.

**Inventory Guidelines:** Collect sporolating material.

**Comments:** *Ophioglossum pusillum* can be easily mistaken for *Ophioglossum vulgatum*, which is frequent throughout Ohio in dry to mesic woods and floodplains. It is easily overlooked and should be more common than currently known. This species should be sought in wet meadows and other open, wet meadows.

Most specimens were collected in the late 1800s and early 1900s. There is little literature on the ecology of this species.

**Selected References:**

Flora of North America Editorial Committee, eds. 1993. Flora of North America North of Mexico. Vol. 2. New York and Oxford. 475 pp.



**Ohio Natural Heritage Program**

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Last updated: Feb/2008