

PLEOPELTIS POLYPODIOIDES (L.) E.G. Andrews & Windham
Little Gray Polypody

FAMILY: Polypodiaceae

HABIT: Perennial from a creeping rhizome, fronds evergreen, 6-25 cm.; sporulating July-September.

SIMILAR SPECIES: A distinctive and easily identified species. Somewhat resembles the common polypody (*P. virginianum*), but differing in the unusual gray scales on the undersurface of the fronds.

TOTAL RANGE: FL to TX, s. to Guatemala and n. to MD, OH, IL, MO, and OK; the typical variety occurs over much of Central and South America.

STATE RANGE: There are post-1960 collections only from Adams and Hocking counties. There are pre-1960 reports from 5 other counties: Clermont, Gallia, Hamilton, Highland, and Meigs.

STATE STATUS: 1980-1997: Endangered, 1998 to present: Threatened.

HABITAT: In a variety of periodically moist situations in sun or shade; in much of its range it is epiphytic on tree branches; walls, rock exposures, roadbanks; usually on calcareous or neutral substrates. All known Ohio populations are on dolomite or sandstone.

HAZARDS: Trampling; rock-climbing; mechanical disturbance of habitat.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown, but probably good.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Collect complete, mature specimens; avoid over-collecting.

COMMENTS: This is a distinctive fern that is not likely to be overlooked and/ or misidentified. It is remarkably drought resistant. The apparently lifeless fronds resume their color and resiliency after a rain, returning rapidly to a desiccated state. Thus this species is often called the resurrection fern.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

Cranfill, R. 1980. Ferns and fern allies of Kentucky. Kentucky Nature Preserves Commission Scientific and Technical Series No. 1 284 p.



Division of Natural Areas and Preserves
Ohio Department of Natural Resources

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