

BOTRYCHIUM BITERNATUM (Sav.) Underw.  
Sparse-lobe Grape-fern

FAMILY: Ophioglossaceae

SYNONYMS: *Botrychium dissectum* Spreng. var. *tenuifolium* (Underw.) Farw.  
*Botrychium dissectum* Spreng. var. *tenuifolium* (Underw.) Fernald  
*Botrychium tenuifolium* Underw.

HABIT: Perennial with evergreen fronds, 5-20 cm.; sporulating July, August.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Easily confused with other evergreen grape-ferns in Ohio, especially with the common *B. dissectum*. *B. biternatum* is distinguished by its sparsely-divided, straight-sided segments, but close comparison between fronds of various species of grape-ferns is required for accurate identification.

TOTAL RANGE: FL to TX, n. to VA, MD, OH, IN, IL, and MO.

STATE RANGE: There are post-1980 specimens from 7 counties: Adams, Clark, Coshocton, Hocking, Lawrence, Monroe and Scioto. There are pre-1980 collections from Brown, Hamilton and Muskingum counties. Braun (1969) reports it from Highland County.

HABITAT: A variety of moist, shaded situations; low woods, mesic ravines, wooded floodplains, thickets.

HAZARDS: Soil compaction; drying of habitat by removal of vegetation.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown; the species seems tolerant of moderate disturbance.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Collect mature specimens. Care should be taken in pressing the frond so as not to overlap or hide the segments; this will aid in identification. If the frond is removed at or just above the petiole base, the bud that will produce the leaf for the following season will be left intact.

COMMENTS: This species is easily misidentified for other, more common grape-ferns. Although it may be more frequent in Ohio than the records indicate, it probably will prove limited to the southern half of the state. Many authors treat this taxon as a variety of *B. dissectum* (see Synonyms). However, Wagner (1961) treats it as a species and demonstrates its correct name is *B. biternatum*, which has priority over *B. tenuifolium*.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

Braun, E.L. 1969. An ecological survey of the vegetation of Fort Hill State Memorial, Highland County, Ohio, and annotated list of vascular plants. Ohio Biol. Surv. Bull. N.S. 3(3). 134 p. + map.

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

Wagner, W.H., Jr. 1960. Evergreen grapeferns and the meanings of infraspecific categories as used in North American pteridophytes. *Amer. Fern Jour.* 50: 32-45.

Wagner, W.H., Jr. 1961. Nomenclature and typification of two botrychiums of the southeastern United States. *Taxon* 10: 165-169.



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