

SWAMP PLUME POLYPODY

Pecluma ptilodon (Kunze) M.G. Price
var. *caespitosa* (Jenman) Lellinger

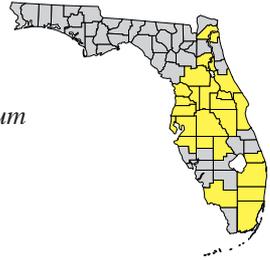
Synonyms: *Polypodium pectinatum* var. *caespitosum*

Family: Polypodiaceae (polypody)

FNAI Ranks: G5/S2

Legal Status: US—none FL—Endangered

Wetland status: US—none FL—UPL



Pecluma ptilodon

Gil Nelson



Pecluma plumula

Gil Nelson



Pecluma dispersa

Gil Nelson

Field Description (photo, top left and drawing, right): Fern with erect or arching fronds; blade 10 - 35 inches long, tapering at top and bottom, cut nearly to the midrib into 20 - 25 pairs of narrow, lance-shaped leaflets, each with a dark midvein. Lowest leaflets gradually reduced to small segments; sori on undersides of leaflets, oval. Leaf stalks brown.

Similar Species: Resurrection fern (*Pleopeltis polypodioides*) is common on live oak branches; it has wider, rounded leaf segments, not cut to the middle of the blade, with many round, 2-colored scales on the undersurface of the leaflets. Ebony spleenwort (*Asplenium platyneuron*) has short, broad, slightly toothed leaflets with small “ears” at the base and with narrow, angled sori; it is terrestrial, usually found in disturbed areas. Sword ferns (*Nephrolepis* spp.) have dark midribs and widely separated, toothed leaflets with “ears” at the base.

Related Rare Species (photos, bottom and right and drawing, left): Two other polypody ferns are state-endangered. Widespread polypody (*Pecluma dispersa*) has black leaf stalks with lowest leaflets very small and angled backwards from the other leaflets; sori round or oval. Plume polypody (*Pecluma plumula*) leaves are often drooping and have black leaf stalks; lower leaf segments abruptly reduced to lobes; sori round.

Swamp plume polypody *Pecluma ptilodon* var. *caespitosa*

Habitat: Swamp plume polypody: rockland hammocks, strand swamps, and wet woods; often on tree bases and fallen logs. Widespread polypody: tree branches and limestone outcrops in dry hammocks. Plume polypody: tree branches or limestone in hammocks, wet woods, and limesinks.

Best Survey Season: All year.

Range-wide Distribution: FL, Mexico, West Indies, Central America.

Conservation Status: Habitat for all three species has been greatly reduced by drainage, logging, and development. Once widespread in peninsular FL, there are few recently observed or protected populations of any of these ferns.

Protection & Management: Avoid wetland drainage, logging, and development of high quality hammocks.

References: Coile 2000, Evans 1969, FNA 1993, IRC 1999, IRC 2000, Lellinger and Evans 1985, Price 1983, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000b.

