

CUTLEAF SPLEENWORT

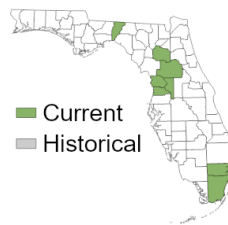
Asplenium abscissum var. *abscissum* Willd.

Synonyms: none

Family: Aspleniaceae (spleenwort)

FNAI Ranks: G3G4TNR/S2

Legal Status: US-none; FL-none



Pinnae 4 - 8 on each side of the rachis; blades deltoid in shape. Upland hardwood forest at Aucilla Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.

Field Description: Small **fern** with a dull green rachis throughout its length, or at least toward the tip; **rachis** grooved on the upper surface, at least in the green portion; the outline of the **leaf blade** narrowly to broadly triangular, widest at the base; **petiole** partially or entirely green (darkened or not at its base); **leaves** pinnate; spores normal; **pinnae** 4 - 8 on each side of the rachis below the merely pinnatifidly lobed upper half of the leaf; basalmost pinnae ca. 3 times as long as wide, toothed but not cut.

Similar Species: See Related rare species section

cutleaf spleenwort

Asplenium abscissum var. *abscissum*

Related Rare Species: Numerous rare spleenworts (*Asplenium* sp.) occur within Florida on limestone substrates or less commonly bark on the bases of certain tree species. The most similar dwarf spleenwort (*Asplenium pumilum*) differs from cutleaf spleenwort in having pinnae 0 - 2 (-4) on each side of the rachis below the merely pinnatifidly lobed upper half of the leaf; basalmost pinnae ca. 1.5 times as long as wide, both toothed and cut (lobed). Ruffled spleenwort (*Asplenium plenum*) is also somewhat similar but differs by rachis green throughout, leaves 2-pinnate only basally, mostly pinnate-pinnatifid to merely pinnate upwards; spores of different and irregular shapes and sizes.

Habitat: Limestone sinkholes, solution holes in south Florida, and sometimes on limestone boulders in dense forest.

Best Survey Season: January - December.

Range-wide Distribution: Mexico, Central America, and northern South America; West Indies; north-central, central and southeastern FL peninsula; northern AL.

Conservation Status: Invasive plant species are a major threat to the species, as well as, recreational activities, potential mining operations on private land, and the poaching of rare ferns from fern grottoes and limestone sinkholes.

Protection and Management: All sites should have an active management plan for addressing invasive plant species and recreational use around these sensitive habitats.

References: Weakley, A. S. and Southeastern Flora Team 2024, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011.

cutleaf spleenwort

Asplenium abscissum var. *abscissum*



Scales brown, linear-deltate in shape. Upland hardwood forest at Aucilla Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.



Growing in crevice of large limestone boulder. Upland hardwood forest at Aucilla Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.