

DROOPING FORKED FERN

Dicranopteris flexuosa (Schrad.) Underwood

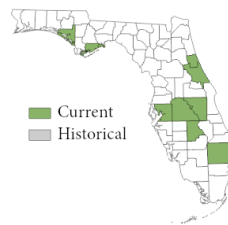
Synonyms: none

Family: Gleicheniaceae (forked fern)

FNAI Ranks: G4/S2S3

Legal Status: US-none FL-none

Wetland Status: US-FAC+ FL-FAC



No Image
Available

Field Description: This species is the only representative taxa of the forked fern family (Gleicheniaceae) in Florida. A tropical species, the fern can be terrestrial or climbing. Has reddish brown hairs on stems of young plants. Leaves can be longer than 1 m and are mostly glabrous. Blades are branched and forked repeatedly. Sori are nearer to the midrib than to the margin and made 4-12 round, yellow sporangia. Plants in Florida have smaller leaves and do not form thickets like they do in other areas, likely because they are reaching the end of their tropical range here. Nodding club-moss (*Palhinhaea cernua*) is strongly associated with this species and may be an indicator of suitable habitat.

Similar Species: None

Related Rare Species: None in FL.

Habitat: Open slopes, drainage ditches, disturbed slopes

drooping forked fern

Dicranopteris flexuosa

Best Survey Season: Visible all year

Range-wide Distribution: Known from Alabama and Florida, and Mexico, Central America, and South America

Conservation Status: This species is vouchered from ten counties scattered throughout Florida.

Protection and Management: Dependent on maintenance of natural hydrology. Hand-pull exotic species posing threat such as: Chinese brake fern (*Pteris vittata*), cogon grass (*Imperata cylindrica*), Japanese climbing fern (*Lygodium japonicum*), and sword fern (*Nephrolepis cordifolia*). Avoid disturbances to substrate.

References: (FNA) Flora of North America Editorial Committee. 2006. Flora of North America north of Mexico, Vol. 2: Pteridophytes and Gymnosperms: Gleicheniaceae. Oxford University Press, New York. Nelson, G. 2000. The Ferns of Florida, a reference and field guide. Pineapple Press, Inc. Sarasota, FL.