

## FLORIDA FILMY FERN

*Didymoglossum punctatum* ssp. *floridanum*

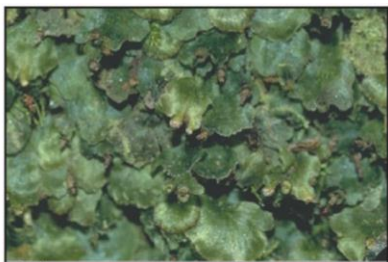
(Poiret) Desvaux

**Synonyms:** *Trichomanes punctatum* Poir. ssp. *floridanum* W. Boer

**Family:** Hymenophyllaceae (filmy fern)

**FNAI Ranks:** G4G5T1/S1

**Legal Status:** US-Endangered; FL-Endangered



*Trichomanes punctatum* ssp. *floridanum*

Gil Nelson



*Trichomanes holopterum*

Gil Nelson

**Field Description:** Small **fern** with crowded, overlapping leaves and long, thread-like **stems**. **Leaves** less than 2.5 cm long, filmy and delicate; blades rounded or elongated, with dark, branched hairs on margins (visible with magnification). **Midvein** extends less than halfway up the leaf then repeatedly forks. **Spores** are produced in several tiny, conical, flaring, dark-lipped structures (**soral involucre**s) on the tips of each leaf; a **bristle** protrudes from each involucre.

**Similar Species:** Four other species of filmy fern occur in FL and all are rare or endangered: winged filmy fern (*Trichomanes holopterum* - photo, bottom right), Kraus' filmy fern (*Trichomanes krausii* - drawing, left), Peters' filmy fern (*Trichomanes petersii*), and lined filmy fern (*Trichomanes lineolatum* - probably extirpated). Filmy ferns may be mistaken for moss, algae, or liverworts; look for veins on the leaf blades, dark hairs and soral involucre on the leaf margins, or root-like hairs on the creeping stems to confirm that the plant is a filmy fern.

## Florida filmy fern

## *Didymoglossum punctatum* ssp. *floridanum*

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**Habitat:** Tree trunks in hammocks, edges of limesinks, and limestone boulders, often with mosses and liverworts.

**Best Survey Season:** Spring-summer.

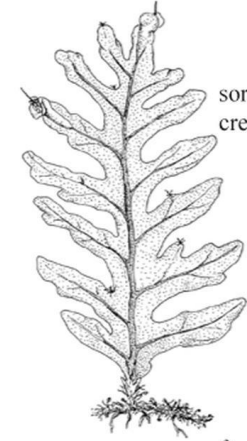
**Range-wide Distribution:** Florida filmy fern is endemic to FL.

**Conservation Status:** Few populations of filmy ferns are left in FL, and only a few of these are protected. Logging, limerock mining, and wetland draining have destroyed most populations. Lowering of the water table threatens ferns that grow on limestone outcrops. Exotic pest plants also threaten several populations. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designated 4,195 acres of critical habitat in 2022.

**Protection and Management:** Eradicate exotic pest plants. Purchase sites on private lands or protect with conservation easements. Protect and restore natural hydrology and maintain water table.

**References:** Coile 2000, FNA 1993, IRC 1999, Nauman 1986, Nelson 2000, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000b.

*Trichomanes krausii*



soral involu-  
cre with dark



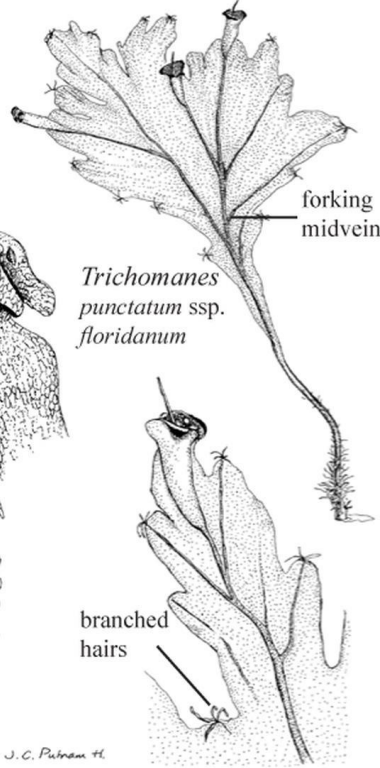
bristle



*Trichomanes*  
*punctatum* ssp.  
*floridanum*

branched  
hairs

J. C. Palmer fl.



forking  
midvein