CREEPING STAR-HAIR FERN
Goniopteris reptans (J.F. Gmel.) C. Presl
Synonyms: *Thelypteris reptans* (J.F. Gmel.) Morton var. *reptans* ; *Polypodium reptans* J.F. Gmel.; *Thelypteris reptans* (J.F. Gmel.) Morton
Family: Thelypteridaceae (marsh fern)
FNAI Ranks: GNR/S2
Legal Status: US-none; FL-Endangered


Thelypteri reptans
Gil Nelson


Thelypteris sclerophylla
Gil Nelson

Field Description: Fern with evergreen **fronds**, arching or prostrate, often rooting at the tips, 10 - 30 cm long, with green **leaf stalks**. **Leaflets**, 1.3 - 2.5 cm long, with rounded teeth and star-shaped hairs (visible with magnification). **Stems** creeping or slightly erect, scaley and covered with star-shaped hairs. **Sori** round.

Similar Species: There are more than a dozen similar ferns in Florida, many found in the same rocky habitat as creeping star-hair fern, which is distinguished by relatively small fronds that root at the tip and closely spaced leaflets with shallow, rounded teeth and blunt tips.

Related Rare Species: Stiff star-hair fern (*Goniopteris sclerophylla* syn. *Thelypteris sclerophylla*), state-endangered, also has star-shaped or forked hairs on the creeping stems and fronds. Unlike creeping star-hair fern, it has pointed teeth on the leaflets and does not root at the tips of fronds. In Florida, stiff star-hair fern occurs only in rockland hammocks in Miami-Dade County, but it is common in the West Indies and Central and South America. Also see toothed maiden fern (*Meniscium serratum*) in this guide.

creeping star-hair fern ***Goniopteris reptans***

Habitat: Hammocks; around limestone outcrops and sinkholes.

Best Survey Season: All year.

Range-wide Distribution: Florida, Mexico, West Indies, Guatemala, Venezuela.

Conservation Status: Creeping star-hair fern was collected from several counties in central Florida in the early 1900's, but has been seen only in Suwannee, Citrus, and Dade counties in recent years.

Protection and Management: Limerock mining, clearing of mesic and rockland hammocks, invasion by exotic species, and lowering of the water table, has destroyed much of these species' habitat. Preservation of habitat and natural hydrology is the most important protection strategy.

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

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