

## HAY SCENTED FERN

*Mucura bipinnata* (Cav.) L.A. Triana & Sundue

**Synonyms:** *Dennstaedtia adiantoides* T. Moore;

*Dennstaedtia bipinnata* (Cav.) Maxon

**Family:** Dennstaedtiaceae (cuplet fern)

**FNAI Ranks:** G4/S1

**Legal Status:** US-none FL-Endangered

**Wetland Status:** US-OBL+ FL-UPL



Gil Nelson

**Field Description:** Fern with creeping underground stems and erect or arching **fronds** to 8 feet tall and 3 feet wide. **Blade** bright green, shiny, divided 2 - 4 times, giving the blade a lacy appearance; blades smell of "new-mown hay" when crushed. **Stalk** pale tan, smooth, half as long or nearly equalling the blade in length. Tiny "cups" (**indusia**) in notches on the leaf margins contain the spore-producing **sporangia**.

**Similar Species:** Creeping bramble fern (*Hypolepis repens*) also has large fronds but has prickles along the stalks; its indusia are flaps rather than cups that are folded over the sori in notches at the base of blade segments. Its fronds are not hay-scented.

**Related Rare Species:** None.

**Habitat:** Moist to wet hammocks.

**Best Survey Season:** Spring-summer; but leaves are distinctive all year.

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

**Conservation Status:** Plants discovered around Lake Okeechobee in the 1920s were destroyed by agriculture; plants reported from Duval County were transplanted from Lake Okeechobee. There is one population at Spring Hammock Preserve in Seminole county, another remaining natural population on private land in Seminole County, and two populations in Brevard Co of unknown status. There are also several populations in experimental gardens.

**Protection and Management:** Prevent draining and logging in wetlands. Eradicate exotic pest plants.

**References:** Coile 2000, FNA 1993, Kennedy 2016, Nelson 2000, Tryon 1960, Ward 1979, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a, Williams 2016, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000b.