

FLORIDA FILMY FERN

Trichomanes punctatum Poir. ssp. *floridanum* Wess. Boer

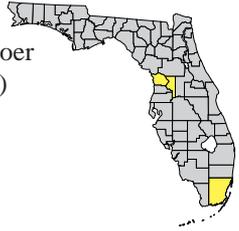
Synonym: *Trichomanes sphenoides* Kunze (misapplied)

Family: Hymenophyllaceae (filmy fern)

FNAI Ranks: G4T1/S1

Legal Status: US—none FL—Endangered

Wetland Status: US—UPL FL—UPL



Gil Nelson

Trichomanes punctatum ssp. *floridanum*



Gil Nelson

Trichomanes holopterum

Field Description (photo, top left and drawing, right): Small fern with crowded, overlapping leaves and long, thread-like stems. Leaves less than 1 inch 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) on the tips of each leaf; a bristle protrudes from each involucre.

Similar and Related 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 *Trichomanes punctatum* ssp. *floridanum*

Habitat: Florida filmy fern: tree trunks in hammocks, edges of limesinks, and limestone boulders, often with mosses and liverworts. Winged filmy fern: cypress logs and trunks in the Big Cypress. Kraus' filmy fern: buttressed roots and tree bases in rockland hammocks in Dade County.

Best Survey Season: All year.

Range-wide Distribution: Florida filmy fern is endemic to FL. Winged filmy fern: FL, West Indies. Kraus' filmy fern: FL, West Indies, Mexico, Central and South America.

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.

Protection & 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

