

rattlesnake fern *Botrychium virginianum*

Kingdom: Plantae

Division/Phylum: Pteridophyta

Class: Filicopsida

Order: Ophioglossales

Family: Ophioglossaceae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The rattlesnake fern has bright green, triangular leaves that are divided into segments and have a lacy appearance. Each leaf may be 10 inches long and 12 inches wide. The leafstalk and sporophyll stalk are each about 12 inches long. The sporophyll stalk grows from the point where the main stalk and leaf stalk meet. The sporophyll does not last long, withering immediately after producing spores. The roots are fleshy, long, horizontally branching and two or more inches below the soil's surface.

BEHAVIORS

The rattlesnake fern may be found statewide in Illinois. This plant grows in shaded spots in dry or moist woodlands or wet thickets. The rattlesnake fern produces spores from June through July on a sporophyll that has six or more branches. The spore cases are bright yellow.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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