

royal fern *Osmunda spectabilis*

Kingdom: Plantae

Division/Phylum: Pteridophyta

Class: Filicopsida

Order: Polypodiales

Family: Osmundaceae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The royal fern is a large plant that can grow to six feet tall. Its leaves are in erect clusters and are divided into six or more pairs of leaflets. Each leaflet is further divided into eight or more pairs of widely-spread, rounded subleaflets. The fertile leaves have light-brown, spore-bearing leaflets at the tip. The yellow or green rachis is thin. The smooth, yellow stipe is nearly round.

BEHAVIORS

The royal fern may be found statewide in Illinois. It grows in swamps, woods and on sandstone ledges. Spores are produced from April through June.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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