



rattlesnake fern

Botrychium virginianum

Kingdom: Plantae
Division/Phylum: Filicophyta
Class:
Order:
Family:

FEATURES

The rattlesnake fern has bright green, triangular leaves which are divided into segments and have a lacy appearance. Each leaf may be 10 inches long and 12 inches wide. The leaf stalk 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 which has six or more branches. The spore cases are bright yellow.

HABITATS

- bottomland forests
- coniferous forest
- southern Illinois lowlands
- upland deciduous forest

ILLINOIS STATUS

- common
- endangered
- threatened
- native
- exotic

ILLINOIS RANGE

Permanent resident: statewide

Summer resident:

Migrant:

Winter resident:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.
Biodiversity of Illinois, Volume 2: Woodland Habitats CD-ROM.