

MASSACHUSETTS RARE AND ENDANGERED PLANTS

BRAUN'S HOLLY-FERN

(Polystichum braunii (Spencer) Feé.)

DESCRIPTION

Braun's Holly-fern is a large dark green fern which grows from stout, suberect rootstock. The blades taper towards each end, are 1-2' (.3-.6m.) long and twice pinnate (blades divided into leaflike pinnae and these further divided into pinnules). The pinnae are lanceolate to narrowly oblong, obtuse to acute, sharply toothed, and have long, soft, hair-like scales. The fronds (the expanded leaf-like portions) are nearly evergreen and slightly leathery with 4-5" (10-12.5cm.) long stipes (the "leaf-stalk" of the blade). The stem of the frond is furrowed and covered with pale brown scales.



SIMILAR SPECIES IN MASSACHUSETTS

Evergreen Wood-fern (Dryopteris intermedia Gray) often occupies the same habitats, but the blades are broader, do not taper to both ends, are not leathery, and lack the hair-like scales.

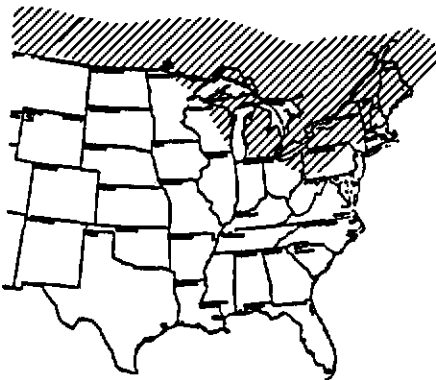
Britton, N.L. and H.A. Brown. An Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and Canada. Dover Publications, Inc. 1970 reprint of 1913 ed.

HABITAT IN MASSACHUSETTS

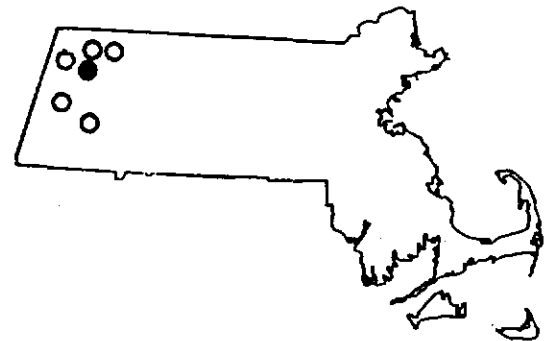
Braun's Holly-fern prefers humus-rich northern hardwood/conifer forests on talus slopes, rocky ravines, and stream banks, apparently requiring continuously cool and moist conditions and usually favoring circumneutral soil.

RANGE

This fern ranges from Nova Scotia to Alaska, south to western Massachusetts, the mountains of Pennsylvania, Michigan, and British Columbia.



Distribution of Braun's Holly-fern



● Verified since 1978
○ Reported prior to 1978

Distribution in Massachusetts by Town

(continued overleaf)

BRAUN'S HOLLY-FERN (continued)

POPULATION STATUS

Braun's Holly-fern is considered "Endangered" in Massachusetts. Currently (1978 to present), there has been only one verified occurrence, on Mt. Greylock; historically there have been only five occurrences vouchered. Repeated searches to suitable habitats have failed to locate these or other populations.