

walking fern

Asplenium rhizophyllum

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Pteridophyta
Class: Filicopsida
Order: Polypodiales
Family: Aspleniaceae

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

FEATURES

The walking fern has leaves that are green throughout the year. Each single, long, pointed leaf grows out from the rootstock at a central point. A leaf may be about six inches long and one inch wide at the heart-shaped base. The triangular-shaped leaf is tough. It is green above and paler on the underside. The green stipe is short and fat with a brown base.

BEHAVIORS

The walking fern occurs in scattered locations statewide in Illinois. It grows in rocky woods. Spores are produced from May through September. When a leaf tip touches and remains in contact with the ground, a new plant can grow from the tip. The plant can spread in this manner, thus the “walking fern” name.



clusters of fronds

ILLINOIS RANGE



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Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none