

walking fern *Asplenium rhizophyllum*

Kingdom: Plantae

Division/Phylum: 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.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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