

-State Species Abstract-
-Wyoming Natural Diversity Database-

CRYPTOGRAMMA STELLERI
FRAGILE ROCKBRAKE
Family: Pteridaceae

Status:

US Fish & Wildlife Service: None.
Agency Status: None.

Heritage Rank:

Global: G5 State: S1
WYNDD Plant List: Disjunct (medium
conservation priority)

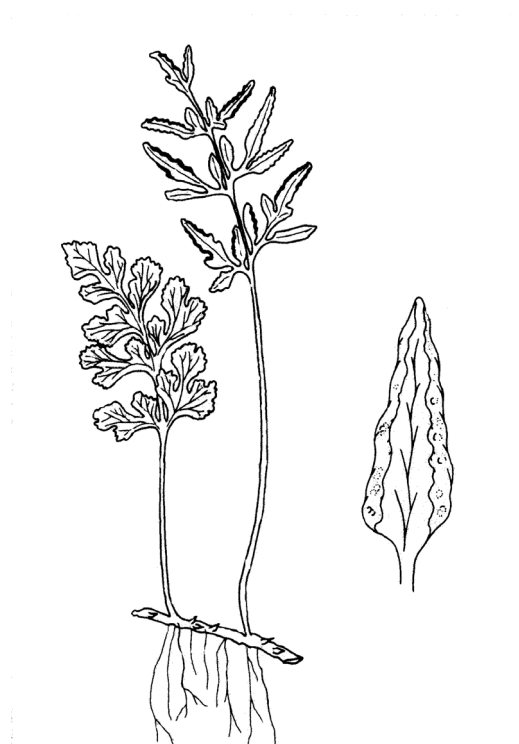
Description: Fragile rockbrake is a perennial fern with leaves scattered along a creeping, scaly rhizome. Leaves are of 2 types, with separate and morphologically distinct vegetative (sterile) and sporangia-bearing (fertile) forms. Vegetative leaves have long, glabrous, reddish-brown leafstalks and thin, once to twice compound, lance-shaped to elliptic glabrous blades 3.5-9 cm long and 2-5.5 cm wide. Leaflets are broadly ovate with smooth or rounded-toothed margins. Fertile leaves have long stalks equalling to twice as long as the twice-pinnate, lance-shaped, 2.5-14 cm long blade. Leaf segments are nearly linear with inrolled margins covering the round sori and have blunt tips. (Dorn 1992; Hitchcock et al.1969; Lellinger 1985).

Similar Species: *Cryptogramma acrostichoides* has clustered leaves with thick, leathery blades and persistent leaf stalks. *Aspidotis densa* has leaflets of the fertile blade with sharp, pointed tips (Dorn 1992).

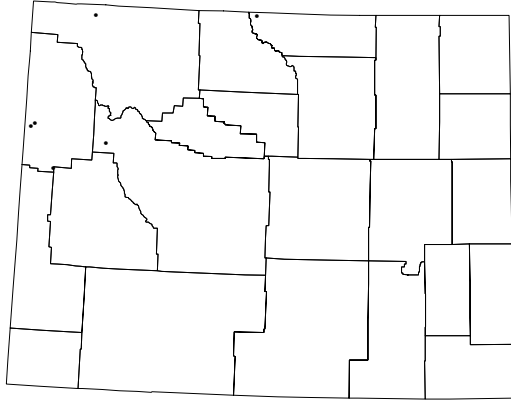
Flowering/Fruiting Period: The spore producing period is from July to August (Hartman et al 1991).



Above: *Cryptogramma stelleri* by Walter Fertig.
Below: *C. stelleri* by Jane Dorn from Dorn and Dorn (1972).



Distribution: Alaska to Labrador south to Oregon, Montana, Iowa, Michigan, and West Virginia, with disjunct populations in Wyoming, New Mexico, and Utah. In Wyoming, known from the Wind River, Teton, Wyoming, and Bighorn ranges and Yellowstone Plateau in Fremont, Park, Sheridan, and Teton counties.



Above: Wyoming distribution of *C. stelleri*.

Habitat: Found in moist, protected locations. Occurs in thin, mossy soil in shady limestone cliffs near water at 6600-8700 feet.

Occurrences in Wyoming: Known from 5 extant occurrences, 3 of which have been located since 1990 (most recently in 1996) and 1 historical record.

Abundance: Little census data are available, but this species appears to be extremely uncommon and restricted to small microsites within a specialized habitat (ledges with thin mossy soil in shady limestone cliffs near water).

Trends: Not known.

Protection Status: The only protected occurrence in the state is in Yellowstone National Park. One occurrence is located within the potential Mann Creek Research Natural Area on Bighorn National Forest. All

other populations are on public lands managed for multiple use.

Threats: May be threatened by logging activity or road construction in its habitat.

Managed Areas: Occurs on Bighorn, Bridger-Teton, Shoshone, and Targhee National Forests and Yellowstone National Park.

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