

*DRYOPTERIS EXPANSA*  
SPREADING WOODFERN  
Family: Pteridaceae

Status:

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

Heritage Rank:

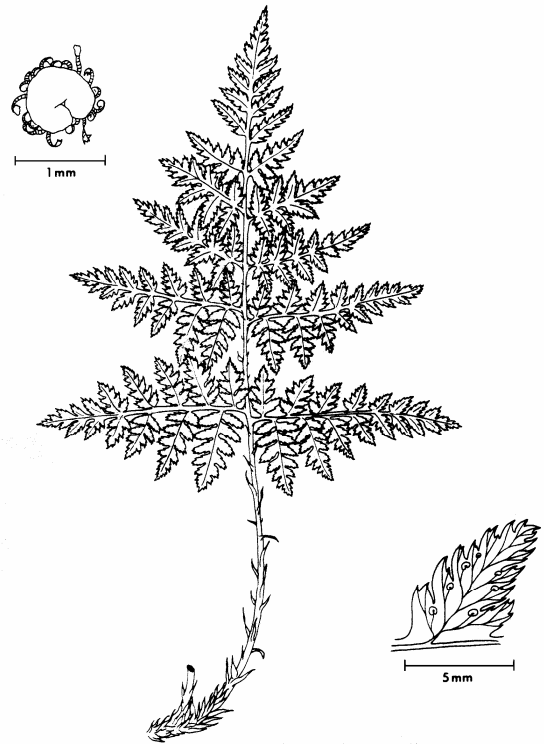
Global: G5 State: S1  
WYNDD Plant List: Peripheral (Low  
conservation priority)

Description: Spreading woodfern is a perennial with clumped, semi-evergreen leaves from an ascending or suberect rhizome. Leaf blades are oval to triangular (widest near the base), 20-60 cm long, 15-30 mm wide, and twice to thrice pinnately compound. The basal pinnae of the lowermost leaflets are conspicuously longer (2-3 x) on the bottom half of the leaflet than the top half. Leafstalks are 10-40 cm long and have pale brown scales with darker centers. Spore clusters (sporangia) are covered by a membranous indusium with a distinct cleft at the middle (Dorn 1992, Gleason 1991, Lellinger 1985).

Synonyms: *Dryopteris assimilis*.

Similar Species: *Dryopteris filix-mas* has twice-compound leaves that are widest near the middle. *Polystichum* spp. have evergreen, leathery, once to twice pinnately compound leaves with spiny margined leaflets and uncleft indusia (Dorn 1992).

Distribution: Rangewide, *Dryopteris expansa* occurs in 4 main areas: NW North America from Alaska to Alberta and south to N California and Colorado; Minnesota to Greenland and south to S Quebec;



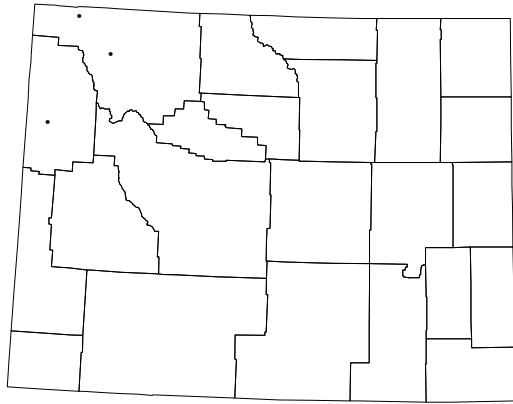
Above: *Dryopteris expansa* by Jane Dorn from Dorn and Dorn (1972).

Scandinavia to central Europe; and Manchuria, Kamchatka, and Japan (Carlson and Wagner 1982). In Wyoming, this species is restricted to the Yellowstone Plateau and Absaroka and Teton ranges in Park and Teton counties.

Habitat: This species inhabits moist woods and rocky soils. It is often found in wet soils under or associated with conifers (Gleason 1991). Wyoming populations occur at 6800-7800 feet.

Occurrences in Wyoming: Known from 3 extant occurrences in Wyoming, the most recent observed in 1997.

Abundance: Populations typically reported as "rare". One colony in Yellowstone National Park had fewer than 100 plants in 1997.



Wyoming distribution of *Dryopteris expansa*.

Trends: Not known.

Protection Status: All known occurrences are found in protected areas (North Absaroka Wilderness and Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks).

Threats: Not known.

Managed Areas: Occurs on Shoshone National Forest and Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks.

References:

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Gleason, H.A. and A. Cronquist. 1991. Manual of Vascular Plants of Northeastern United States and Canada. New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY.

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Author: Kevin O'Dea and Walter Fertig  
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