

SIZE: 8-12 cm tall.

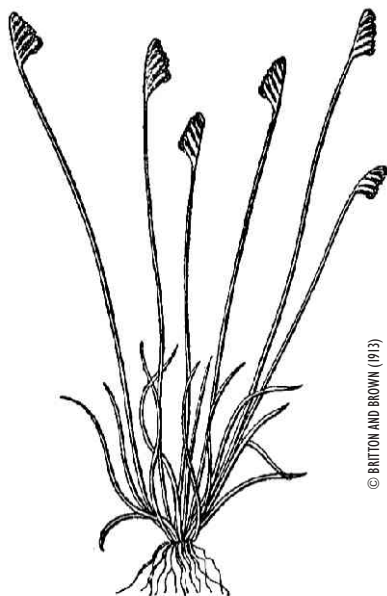
LEAVES: Two types of leaves (fronds). Non-reproductive (sterile) fronds are short, curly, unbranched, and grass-like (2-6 cm long, 0.3 mm wide), and emerge together in a cluster (basal rosette). Reproductive (fertile) fronds are straight, green and tall with comb-shaped reproductive structures at the top. Fertile fronds from the previous year can be persistent and brownish.

STEM: Short, slender creeping stem (rhizome).

NOTES: This species does not look like other ferns in NS. The word pusilla means “very small” which is true for this fern! It takes a careful eye to spot it on the shoreline.



Reproductive (fertile) fronds © ALAIN BELLIVEAU



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Curly non-reproductive (sterile) fronds © BRAD TOMS



Sterile fronds basal rosette © BRAD TOMS



Comb-shaped reproductive structure (with finger for scale) © BRAD TOMS

Habitat:

Peaty lakeshores and wetlands (acidic sphagnum bogs).

Interesting point: The Curly-grass Family (*Schizaceae*) contains 150 species that are mostly found in the tropics. Curly-grass Fern is the only species from this group that is found in NS, and is common on Brier Island!

Similar Species: None.