

Onoclea sensibilis



sensitive fern

Family	Dryopteridaceae		
Origin	Native		
WIS Code	FACW	CoC	4

DESCRIPTION

The vegetative fronds (leaves) of sensitive fern wither with frost, giving this species its name. The sterile compound fronds have an overall triangular look, with wavy smooth margins on the lobes.

SPORES

Fertile fronds appear in mid-summer, persist until the next spring. Green at first, they quickly turn dark brown to black, with rows of bead-like, tightly wrapped pinnae (leaf or frond sections) with spore containing sori (clusters of spore-bearing cases or sporangia) tight within.

HABITAT

Floodplain forests, moist meadows, and swamps.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Woodwardia areolata, netted chainfern, rare in West Virginia, has finely toothed margins and lacks the unique bead-like fertile frond structure.



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Fertile frond



Woodwardia areolata



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Fertile frond