

AN ATYPICAL ATHYRIUM FROM EASTERN TENNESSEE. — A recent botanical exploration of the Doe River gorge in Carter County, Tennessee has led to the discovery on 8 August 1979 of an unusual growth form of *Athyrium asplenoides* (Michx.) A. A. Eaton. A single population consisting of several frond-bearing rhizomes occurs along a moist, northeast-facing rock face at Pardee Point, adjacent to the abandoned roadbed of the East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad, 1.5 miles southeast of Hampton (Wofford, Smith & Collins 79-222, TENN, US). The identity of the specimen was confirmed by A. M. Evans.

These plants resemble vigorously growing parsley and have crispate, fasciated pinnae crowded toward the lamina apex (Fig. 1). Although this is a dramatic departure from the usual frond morphology of *Athyrium*, the fragile, pale brown scales of the stipe base, the sparsely glandular indusia, and the paired vascular strands uniting above the stipe base into a U-shaped midvein are distinguishing characters of the genus. Sori are infrequent, are borne intramarginally, and have typical hammate-asplenioid indusia attached near the lateral vein. Examination of the sori reveals aborted sporangia and a complete absence of spores. The apparent adaptation to the rock face, atypical growth form, incomplete sporogenesis, and



FIG. 1. Specimens of *Athyrium asplenoides* mutant from Carter Co., Tennessee (Wofford, Smith & Collins 79-222).

the fact that typical *A. asplenoides* occurs in more mesic sites along the base of the same rock face favors the interpretation that these plants are morphological mutants, rather than of hybrid origin.

In addition to this unusual *Athyrium*, *Sanguisorba canadensis*, *Scirpus cepitosus*, *Paronychia argyrocoma*, and *Drosera rotundifolia* occur at the same locality. Except for *D. rotundifolia*, these species are of restricted occurrence in Tennessee and are included in the list of rare vascular plants of Tennessee (Committee for Tennessee Rare Plants. 1978. J. Tenn. Acad. Sci. 53(4):128-133).—David K. Smith and B. Eugene Wofford, Department of Botany, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN 37916, and J. L. Collins, Division of Forestry, Fisheries and Wildlife Development, TVA, Norris, TN 37828.

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