

***Ophioglossum pusillum* Raf.**

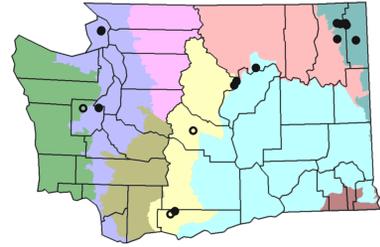
synonym: *Ophioglossum vulgatum* L. (misapplied)

Adder's-tongue

Ophioglossaceae - adder's-tongue family

status: State Threatened, BLM sensitive, USFS sensitive

rank: G5 / S1S2



General Description: Adapted from Flora of North America (1993+) and Lellinger 1985: Perennial fern with 1 sterile leaf per stem. Stem upright, up to 2 cm long, 3 mm diameter. Roots yellow to tan, up to 15 per plant, producing plantlets. Leaves solitary. Blade simple, entire, erect or spreading, pale green, dull, soft herbaceous, mostly oblanceolate to ovate, widest at the middle, up to 10 x 3.5 cm, base tapering gradually, tip rounded; venation a complex network, with included free veinlets in spaces. Basal sheath ephemeral, membranous.

Reproductive Characteristics: Fertile stem 2.5-4.5 times the length of the leaf; sporangia sessile, arranged in 2 rows on the unbranched terminal fertile spike. Sporangial clusters 20-45 x 1-4 mm. Identifiable June to September.

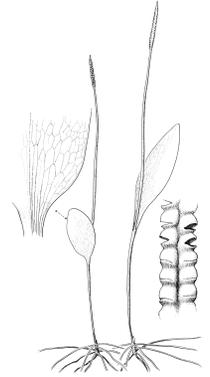


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Identification Tips: *O. pusillum* is the only member of its genus occurring in the Pacific Northwest. It is easily overlooked because of the superficial resemblance of its leaves to those of monocots. The solitary leaf and solitary terminal fertile spike are important identifying characteristics.

Range: Northeastern N.A., west to ND, SD, NE; B.C south to CA, east to ID and MT. Disjunct in AK.

Habitat/Ecology: Seasonally wet areas in pastures, old fields, roadside ditches, bogs, fens, wet meadows, flood plains, moist woods, grassy swales, dry or damp sand, dry hillsides, and in seasonally wet, acidic soil. Elevations in WA: 10-1000 m (40-3200 ft). Associated species include lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*), spirea (*Spiraea douglasii*), sedges (*Carex* spp.), grasses (*Poa compressa*, *P. palustris*, *P. pratensis*, *Phalaris arundinacea*, *Agrostis stolonifera*, and others), grapeferns (*Botrychium* spp.), strawberry (*Fragaria* spp.), ladies' tresses (*Spiranthes* spp.), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), and mosses.

Comments: This plant is rare in several states and Canadian provinces. Threats include grazing, trampling, logging, and any activities that would alter the hydrology of the sites.

References: Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 2; Lellinger 1985.