

American Hart's Tongue Fern

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DESCRIPTION: The American Hart's Tongue fern (*Asplenium scolopendrium* var. *americanum*) is an evergreen leafy fern that grows in highly humid, deeply shaded conditions near limestone sinks and caves. It has smooth fronds that are 5 to 17 inches in length, 0.75 to 1.75 inches wide and lobed at the base. The green petiole portion of the frond is 1 to 5 inches in length with cinnamon colored scales on its surface.



It was [provided protection under the Endangered Species Act](#) as a threatened species in 1989. No critical habitat designation was made at the time of listing.

Alabama populations are limited to two known sites. The Jackson County population is afforded some protection by being on federal property. The Morgan County site is on private property on the pit entrance to a limestone cave. Owners and managers of the two sites in Alabama are aware of the plant's existence and the importance of protecting it and its habitat.

FORESTRY CONSIDERATIONS: It is unlikely that forestry activity will occur in habitats where this plant lives. Avoid these areas not only to preserve the plant, but for operator safety. Removal of timber on site and directly adjacent to this species could result in increased light levels and lower humidity to the detriment of the species.



DISTRIBUTION BY COUNTY: Known only in Morgan and Jackson counties.

Photo Credits: Dr. T. Wayne Barger, Natural Heritage Section, Alabama State Lands Division



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