

The fruit dots before maturity are covered by a loose, bladder-like hood, which gives the name to the genus.

The Fragile Bladder Fern, or Brittle Fern, is more generally distributed, and much more difficult to determine. The hood which covers the young fruit dots soon disappears, and then the fertile fronds look like those of a shield fern. The leafy portion of the frond is from four to twelve inches in length, and is borne upon a slender, naked, brittle stalk which is fully as long. Perhaps the long and slender footstalk is the surest guide to its identification. The Brittle Fern may be found in almost any situation, from dry cliffs to open wet places and rocky woods. Its fronds are very variable in shape; but, even when heavily loaded with fruit, they are graceful. They mature and wither before the summer is over, and sometimes new fronds appear in August. We may possibly find both the old and the new, though it is not a good time to look for either.

If we are in the southern part of Nova Scotia, we may by rare good fortune, find in a bog the Virginian Chain Fern. Its fronds somewhat resemble the sterile fronds of the Cinnamon Fern; and the oblong fruit dots are arranged in chain-like rows near the midrib.

If in Cape Breton or in New Brunswick, there is a fair probability of our finding the Rusty Woodsia; a very interesting little fern, and one easy to determine. It grows in crevices of the driest cliffs, and on exposed rocky banks; and its range extends northward to the Arctic regions, and westward to the Rocky Mountains. The fronds are from four to ten inches long, smooth and green above, but covered with a rusty chaff beneath; and have a jointed stalk, so that when they fall at maturity they leave about an inch of the stalk remaining. One or two other Woodsias, smaller, more naked and more delicate than this species, can be found on moist cliffs in northern New Brunswick.

The Holly Fern, well known in our greenhouses, which also extends to the Rocky Mountains and along the Arctic coast, has been reported from one station in Cape Breton. Other very rare ferns in our region are the Maidenhair Spleenwort, a pretty little fern with a dark purple thread-like stalk that accounts for the name, found on moist cliffs at several places in Nova Scotia; the Green Spleenwort, a small evergreen fern with a green stalk, found on limestone rocks in New Brunswick,

the Fragrant Shield Fern, known with us only at one place in Nova Scotia and two in New Brunswick, and the Slender Cliff Brake. The latter is a delicate little fern growing in crevices of shaded rocks in northern New Brunswick, but not reported elsewhere in the lower provinces. The fronds, twice pinnate, or nearly so, are from three to six inches in length, and quite unlike. The divisions of the fertile frond are narrow and pointed, the fruit hidden by the revolute margin as in the Common Brake. The sterile fronds are few and smaller, and their ultimate divisions are broad and rounded, not unlike those of the Smooth Woodsia which is sometimes found near it.

The Ostrich Fern and the Interrupted Fern will bear transplanting, and can be grown with good effect in a shady place in the garden. Some of the other native ferns will do well in places specially prepared for them.

It is said that the Maidenhair Fern and the Bulblet Bladder Fern were the first of our ferns to be taken to England. The writer remembers a mass of them growing together in the deep shade of a butternut grove as the most charming group of ferns he has ever seen. The butternuts were cut down later to clear the land, and their great trunks were burned because it would have cost more than they were worth to take them to market. This was many years ago. Butternut is scarcer now; and probably the aggregate value of all the crops that have grown there since, might not, equal the net value of the wood to-day. Certainly, all the roses and lilies that the land could be made to produce, would be less beautiful than the stately trees and the ferns they sheltered. No one, perhaps, would wish to keep private owners from extending the area of cultivation and including in it the richest land that they possess; but we may rejoice that some land owners can afford to keep the natural growth on a part of their holdings, even where they do not find it profitable to do so. There are still many spots within our reach where the beauty of nature is undisturbed; spots of sylvan calm and quiet, where the rapt visitor feels it almost a desecration to touch leaf or frond, and is glad that the springing moss will hide all sound and trace of his footsteps and leave no mark of his intrusion.

"They say that this will be the last great war."  
"It looks to me as if it was going to be the first."—*Boston Transcript.*