

Vascular Plants of Williamson County
Cyrtomium falcatum – HOLLY FERN [Dryopteridaceae]

Cyrtomium falcatum (L. f.) C. Presl, HOLLY FERN. Perennial herb, evergreen, rhizomatous, lacking stolons, fibrous-rooted, rosetted, mostly 1-stemmed at base, with arching to widely spreading leaves, < 50 cm tall; shoots with only rosette leaves, at the base covered with scarious to papery scales; rhizome (**stem**) vertical, lacking internodes, hidden by scales and emerging adventitious roots, the scales scarious and orangish brown. **Leaves:** helically alternate, 1-pinnately compound mostly with 13–20+ leaflets (pinnae), to 1100 cm long, long-petiolate, without stipules; petiole subcylindric weakly ridged, to 500 × 5–8 mm, tough, green, lower portion with glossy, orangish brown scarious scales, the largest scales lanceolate, to 19 × 6 mm, easily abscised, ciliate on margins with pale brown, crooked, fine hairs, with tail-like tip (attenuate), grading upward eventually to pale brown, slender, linear scales 5 × 0.5 mm, when immature with fine hairs aging glabrescent, surfaces with parallel lineages of elongate cells and lacking veins; rachis subcylindric with an inconspicuous ridge from each leaflet, green, with leaflets alternate and mostly widely spaced (5–85 mm apart); petiolules cylindric, to 6 mm long; blades of leaflets asymmetric with midrib off-center (closer to trailing margin) and blade and vein somewhat curved (falcate), acuminate-ovate to acuminate-lanceolate, oblique and tapered at base, serrate-dentate on trailing margin often subentire near base, serrate-dentate on forward margin often with a short lobe below midblade, pinnately veined with midrib slightly sunken on upper surface and somewhat raised on lower surface, upper surface glossy dark green and glabrous, lower surface lighter green and when aged forming spore-producing structures (sori). **Sori:** scattered on lower surface of leaflet not touching principal veins, 20+, initially circular and disclike but after sporulation resembling a low dome, < 1–2 mm across; indusium initially concealing sporangia, circular and umbrellalike (peltate), 0.5–1 mm diameter, aging brown papery and sometimes scalloped, persistent (not shriveled). **Sporangia:** stalked, 0.15–0.2 mm across, brown. **Spores:** brown.

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