



## ***Cystopteris bulbifera* - Bulblet Fern**

**COMMON NAME:** Bulblet Fern, Bladder Fern, Bulblet Bladder Fern, Bublelet Fragile Fern

**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Cystopteris bulbifera* - *Cystopteris* is from the Greek *kustis* meaning bladder and *pterus* for fern. *Bulbifera* is from the Greek *bolbos* meaning bulbous root and *fera* from Latin meaning to bear, hence bulb bearing.

**REPRODUCTION:** By spores. Sori (spore sacs) are found on the backside of the leaf, back from leaf edge. They are few and scattered. Also reproduces by bulblets that fall off and form new ferns.

**SIZE:** Fronds are 8 inches long and 3 inches wide with clumps of 12-30 inches.

**BEHAVIOR:** Grows most commonly on calcareous rocks, but will also grow in wet spongy areas. Fronds are pendant from cliffs and recumbent when the fern grows among rocks. Rootstock is slender and creeping. Spreads vegetatively as well as by spores or bulblets.

**SITE REQUIREMENTS:** Moist, shady areas, especially shaded ledges, cliffs and rocky slopes. It is such an interesting fern that a suitable location may be prepared by burying numerous limestone fragments in humus-rich soil in a moist, heavily shaded area.

**SPECIAL FEATURES:** Graceful, delicate, narrow-leaved, tufted fern. Well-developed fronds tend to have long tapering tips, thrice-cut, narrowly triangular. Some of the fronds usually have the distinctive bulblets. These ferns usually grow in large masses hanging down over limestone cliffs, covering the moist rocks that lie below limestone ridges.

**NATURAL RANGE:** Most of the eastern half of the US. Distributed widely in Wisconsin, but most common in areas underlain by limestone, i.e. the SW counties, the Mississippi areas and the eastern counties.

**SUGGESTED CARE:** Plant near limestone and keep moist.

**COMPANION PLANTS:** Wood fern, Columbine, Wild Sarsaparilla, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Bush Honeysuckle, Miterwort, Spikenard