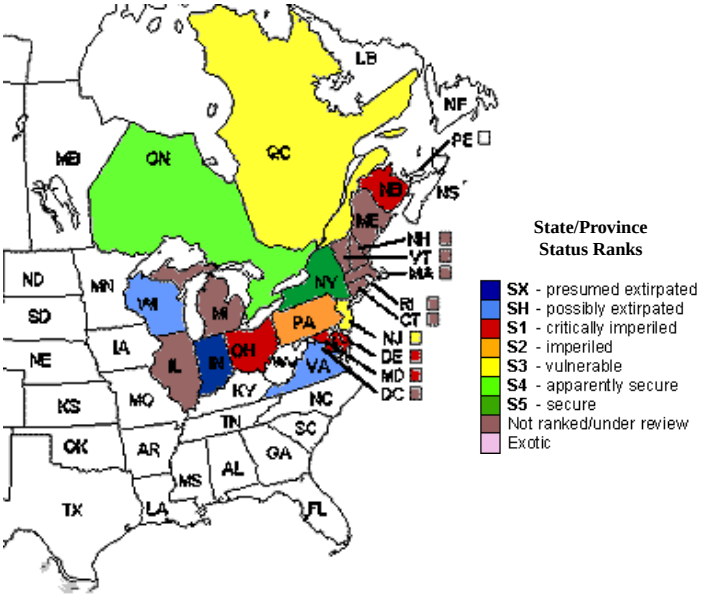
Clinton's Wood Fern
Dryopteris clintoniana

Description
Clinton's wood fern grows from 1½ to 3 feet (4.5-10 dm) tall. Fertile fronds, which have the reproductive spores on the underside, are deciduous and erect. Sterile fronds are smaller, evergreen, and mostly prostrate on the ground. The leaves are divided into leaflets, or pinnae, which are themselves lobed or toothed. The lowest pinnae are triangular in shape and about twice as long as wide. The fertile pinnae are not turned at an angle to the plane of the overall leaf, unlike the more common crested wood fern (*Dryopteris cristata*).

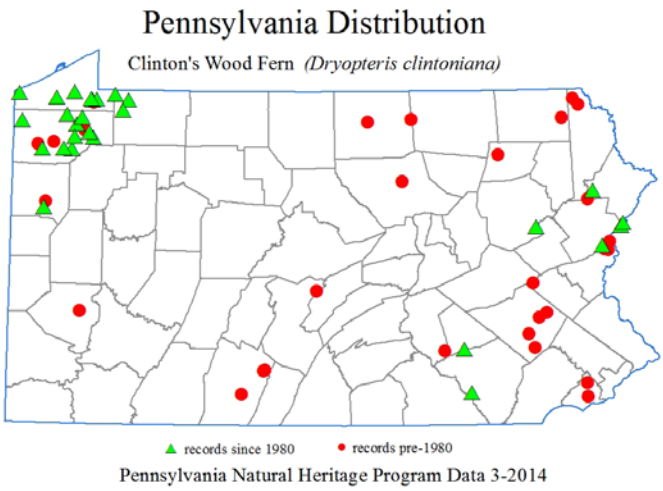
Photo source USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

Distribution & Habitat
Clinton's wood fern has a range from eastern Canada south to the Middle Atlantic States and the Great Lakes states. In Pennsylvania, it has been documented historically in numerous widespread counties. It grows in swampy woodlands.

North American State/Province Conservation Status
Map by NatureServe 2014



Current State Status
The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers Clinton's wood fern to be a species of special concern, based on the few occurrences that have been recently confirmed and its wetland habitat. It does not have a PA legal rarity status, but has been assigned a suggested rarity status of Threatened by PABS. About 15 populations, mostly of them in the northwestern region, are currently known from the state.



Conservation Considerations
The viability of the known populations of Clinton's wood fern and its habitat may be enhanced by creating buffers around wetlands, controlling invasive species, and protecting the natural hydrology surrounding wetlands.

NatureServe conservation status ranks
G5 – Globally secure; **S2** – Imperiled in Pennsylvania.

References

- NatureServe. 2014. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 6.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available http://www.natureserve.org/explorer.
- Rhoads, A.F. and T.A. Block. 2007. The Plants of Pennsylvania: An Illustrated Manual. 2nd edition. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.
- USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. *An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions.* Vol. 1: 20.

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