
NATURE NOTES AND LETTERS

PALE MOONWORT IN MANITOBA: AN OLD RECORD CONFIRMED

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The pale moonwort (*Botrychium pallidum* W.H. Wagner) is a small and inconspicuous fern that was recently excluded from the list of Manitoba moonworts because of the apparent absence of voucher specimens.¹ Its original inclusion into the Manitoba flora² was based on an account of a collection from near Otterburne in south central Manitoba in 1959.³ Detective work by CF has resulted in the rediscovery of the original specimen at the Herbarium P. Louis-Marie, Université de Laval, Québec, QC where it is listed as specimen #199082. We are grateful to D. Farrar (Iowa State University) for confirming the identity of this specimen from a photograph. The inclusion of this species into Manitoba's flora will make it the 11th species of the Ophioglossid fern in the province⁴. Please see the photograph of the specimen and the distribution map (Figure 1).

The herbarium label provides the following information which may help in determining whether a population still exists at that location: " 5 juin 1958. *Botrychium lunaria* (L.) Sw. Bois (à l'est du chemin de fer) au nord du village (Otterburne, Manitoba). J.-P. Bernard #58/7." There is a hand written, unauthored annotation on the herbarium sheet made in 1989 "B. pallidum Wagner". The estimated location of the collection site is 14 0641191E 5484868N, or lat-long: 49 30N, 97 03W.

Pale moonwort is a species that appears in late spring in shady or grassy places throughout the Great Lakes region with disjunct populations elsewhere.⁴ This species has been reported from the Cypress Hills of Saskatchewan,⁵ but not from Alberta.⁴ It has been given the Conservation rank of S1, i.e. "endangered", in both Saskatchewan⁵ and Manitoba.¹

1. Staniforth RJ (2011) Ophioglossid ferns in Manitoba: Moonworts, Grapeferns and Northern Adder's-tongue. *Blue Jay* 69(2):75-87.
2. Punter E (1995) Manitoba's Vascular Plants. Manitoba Conservation Data Centre, Winnipeg, MB.
3. Löve D, and Bernard JP (1959) Flora and vegetation of the Otterburne area, Manitoba, Canada. *Svensk Botanisk Tidskrift* 53:335-461.
4. Wagner WH Jr, Wagner FS (1993) Ophioglossaceae. In: Flora of North America. Volume 2: Pteridophytes and Gymnosperms. Oxford University Press Incorporated, New York, NY, p 85-109.
5. Harms VL, and Leighton AL (2011) Ferns and Fern Allies of Saskatchewan. Flora of Saskatchewan Fascicle 1. Published jointly by Flora of Saskatchewan Flora Association and Nature Saskatchewan. Nature Saskatchewan Special Publications No. 30. Regina, SK.

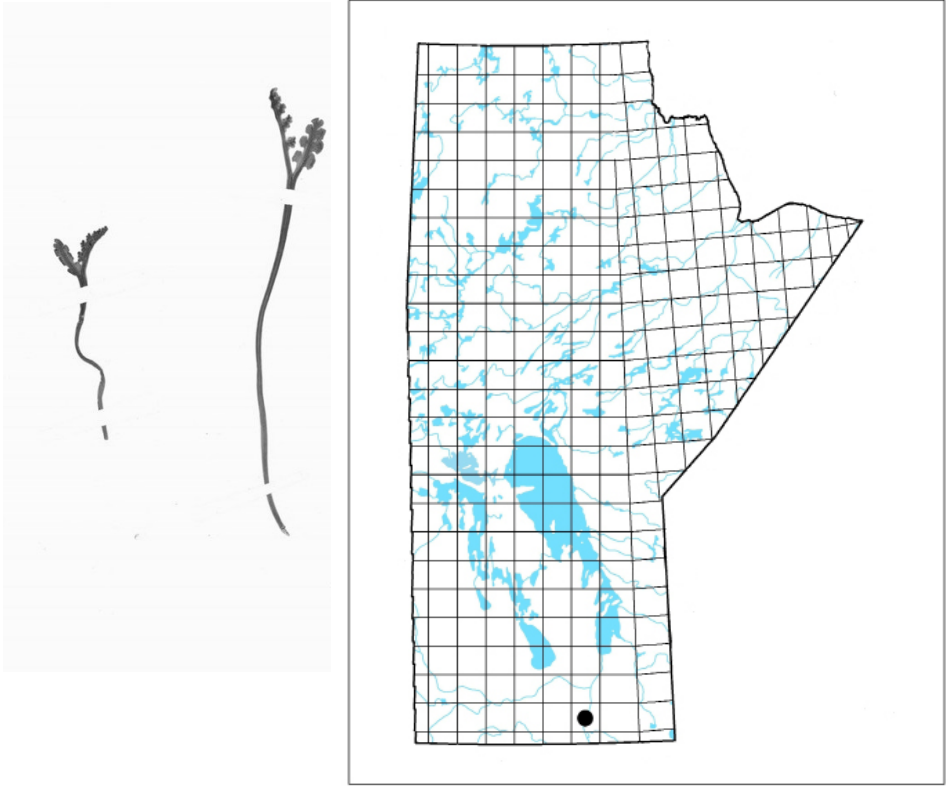


Figure 1. Left: Specimens of pale moonwort collected by J-P Bernard from near Otterburne, Manitoba in 1958. Right: Location of collection site in Manitoba. The map shows a grid of 50 km² squares according to the 1984 Universal Transverse Mercator projection.



“In nature we never see anything isolated, but everything in connection with something else which is before it, beside it, under it and over it.” - Goethe