



photo: Dan Jaffe

# SWEET FERN

*Comptonia peregrina*

A small, aromatic clumping shrub that colonizes and spreads vigorously if left alone. Great native groundcover!

## Benefits for Wildlife

- Sole host plant of the moth *Xenolechia aethiops*
- Flickers eat the fruits
- Provides cover for grouse and rabbits
- In winter, browsed by deer and moose

Host to 64 caterpillar species, including:  
(common names) Sweetfern Leaf Casebearer;  
Wayward Nymph; Sweetfern Geometer;  
Apple Sphinx; Wavy-Lined Emerald; Io Moth

## Benefits for People

- Good plant for stabilizing slopes and embankments
- Dry bundles of leaves to preserve fragrance

## Growing Information

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <i>Sunlight</i>           | Full sun to part shade   |
| <i>Soil Type</i>          | Adaptable, tolerates drought and wet conditions; prefers sandy loams |
| <i>Height</i>             | 2–4'   |
| <i>Width</i>              | 4-8'   |
| <i>Flowering calendar</i> | May to August  |

## Natural Habitat

- Dry, open woods; sandy barrens

