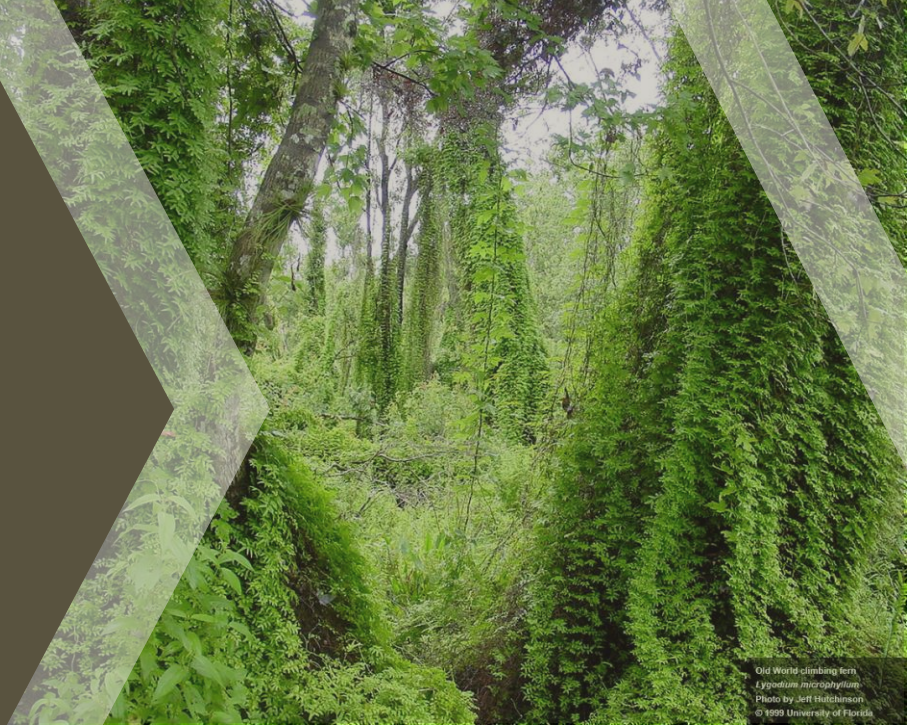


# Old World Climbing Fern

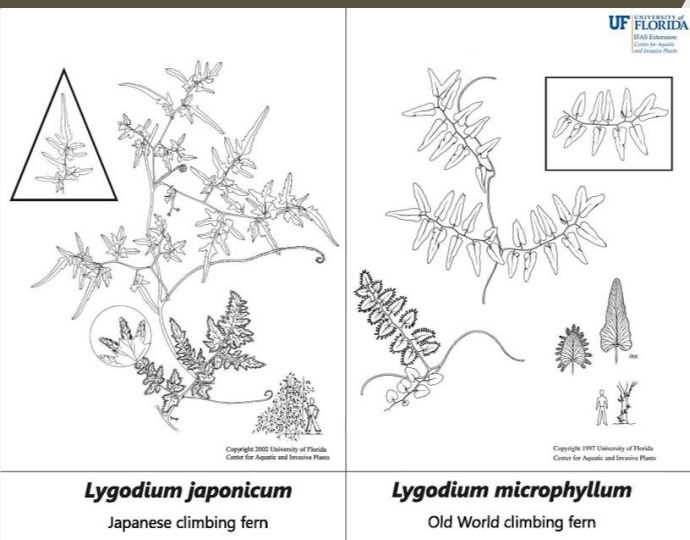
*Lygodium microphyllum*



Old World climbing fern, *Lygodium microphyllum*. Photo by Jeff Halchanson. © 1999 University of Florida.

## What is OWCF?

[OWCF \[identification video\]](#) is native to Africa and Southeast Asia, South Pacific islands, and Australia. The fern was first found growing wild in 1960 in Martin County and now infests over 200,000 acres in South Florida. It is common in South Florida but is spreading as far north as Duval County. This highly invasive fern is aggressive in moist habitats and can spread to new areas without the need of habitat disturbance. It shades out native vegetation by forming a dense canopy. OWCF is similar to Japanese climbing fern, another invasive fern ([see left image for comparison, or this UF IFAS link](#)).



***Lygodium japonicum***  
Japanese climbing fern

***Lygodium microphyllum***  
Old World climbing fern

## Why should we manage it?

OWCF poses management concerns during both wildfires and prescribed fires because it can serve as a fire ladder that carries fire into the tree canopy, killing native trees. Also, portions of burning fern can break free and spread fire to surrounding areas.

Like other ferns, OWCF reproduces via spores, which can be carried by wind, animals, clothes, and equipment. One fertile leaflet can produce about 28,500 spores, and each spore has the potential to start a new population.

*Being able to quickly identify an exotic species in an area and eradicate it before it spreads is one of the most efficient actions that we can do to reduce future treatment costs and impacts to native ecosystems.*

## How can you help?

- Learn more about the specifics of [OWCF treatment at this UF/IFAS online document](#)
- [EDDMapS](#) is available to help with species identification and to [report invasive sightings!](#)
- Join your local [CISMA](#) and follow [FISP](#) for updates.
- Attend local plant classes and spread the word about EDRR!
- [Sign up for alerts on EDDMapS!](#)

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