

Cheilanthes Swartz LIP FERN

Cheilanthes covillei Maxon., COVILLE'S LIP FERN. Perennial herb, rhizomatous, fibrous-rooted, rosetted, short-creeping, ca. 6.5(–30) cm tall; shoots with beadlike leaf segments, blade with long hairs; fiddleheads not obvious; rhizomes shallow, typically 65+ mm long, the scales strongly appressed, awl-shaped, 2–3 mm long, brownish with narrowly colorless margins, rigid, persistent. **Leaves (fronds):** helically alternate, typically odd-3(–4)-pinnately compound with 10–14 primary leaflets per side, petiolate; petiole (stipe) cylindric, 20–45 mm long, scaly, brownish beneath scales, the scales awl-shaped, whitish, membranous to papery; blade ovate to lanceolate in outline, 25–65(–120) × 15–40(–50) mm; rachis cylindric, with whitish, awl-shaped scales 1–1.5 mm long; primary leaflets alternate to subopposite and to 20 mm long at leaf base and decreasing upward, axis brownish and scaly; secondary leaflets subopposite to alternate, lanceolate, to 5 mm long, axis green, scales on lower side the scales lanceolate to ovate, 1.3–3 × 1–1.3 mm, cordate at base typically with overlapping lobes, acuminate at tip, membranous except around point of attachment, sparsely ciliate with long hairs on each basal lobe, the scales on upper surface linear to awl-shaped, white, ciliate at base; ultimate segments somewhat roundish (oblate) to kidney-shaped, 0.6–1 × 1–1.5 mm, dull green on upper surface, inrolled at margins (revolute) and forming a false indusium. **Sori:** with sporangia submarginal on lower surface; false indusia ± crescent-shaped from midpoint, entire or ± crenate, each false indusium concealing 2–3 sporangia. Sporulation December–early spring.

Native. Perennial herb occurring in undisturbed chaparral away from the coast in sandstone crevices and along bases of boulders where moisture is abundant during winter and early spring. Coville's lip fern has rarely been collected but appears to be on ridges and peaks at scattered localities from Lady Face to SMMNRA Circle X Ranch.

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