

*Aspidotis californica* (Hooker) Copel., CALIFORNIA LACE FERN. Perennial herb, drought-deciduous, rhizomatous, fibrous-rooted, rosetted, with numerous ascending to spreading leaves, 10–25(–35) cm tall; shoots glabrous; young fiddleheads inconspicuous at plant base, 2 mm across, whitish, with scales that typically abscise; rhizomes shallow and creeping, bearing persistent scales, the scales long-tapered to needle-shaped, 1.5–3 mm long, brownish, papery, scarios on margins, in  $\times$ -section grayish white with lighter arcs of vascular tissues (steles). **Leaves (fronds):** helically alternate, typically odd-3(–4)-pinnately dissected with subopposite pairs of primary lobes, petiolate; petiole (stipe) 1.5–4 $\times$  blade length, coppery brown, distinctly channeled, when young occasionally with scattered, deciduous papery scales along ridges, the scales to 2 mm long; blade in outline broadly ovate to deltoid-ovate or pentagonal, 30–90(–120)  $\times$  25–80(–110) mm, somewhat glossy; rachis channeled with distinct ridges; primary leaflets in range to 60 mm long, gradually decreased upward, pinnate with 3–5 subopposite pairs of secondary lobes; axis of primary lobe channeled; secondary lobes alternate, lanceolate, to 18 mm long and gradually decreased upward; ultimate lobes lanceolate to rhombic-elliptic, 2–4  $\times$  1–1.4 mm, decurrent at base, serrate, typically curved downward at tip, pinnately veined, upper surface  $\pm$  glossy, lower surface with 2–5 inrolled teeth or lobes each forming a false indusium concealing sporangia (sorus) on lower surface; false indusium  $\pm$  crescent-shaped, 0.4–0.7  $\times$  0.25–0.4 mm, the fringe faintly pigmented, entire or irregularly toothed, concealing 6–10 sporangia. **Sporangia:** stalked,  $\pm$  0.2 mm diameter, with brownish ringlike dehiscence mechanism (annulus). **Spores** pale yellowish. Sporulation December–April.

Native. Perennial herb occurring in undisturbed chaparral away from the coast, growing in rock crevices and along bases of sandstone boulders where moisture is abundant during winter and early spring. *Aspidotis californica*, California lace fern, is inconspicuous but has been found at numerous scattered ridges and peaks, e.g., along the backbone trail. At a distance this species can superficially be mistaken for the common *Pentagramma triangularis*, goldback fern, which instead has yellow waxy exudate on lower blades and purplish red petioles.

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