

Hardy Ferns



Adiantum pedatum

Northern Maidenhair Fern

As delicate as can be, this Maidenhair Fern is easy to grow with fan-shaped, swirling pinules to a height of 18". The light green leaves have shiny dark stems and prefer rich moist soil in light to full shade. Don't let this deciduous native dry out. Try it with Columbines, Old-fashioned Bleeding Hearts, a masculine Rodgersia and the leathery Bergenia for interesting textures in the woodland garden.

Plant 18" apart.

Zones 2 - 8



Athyrium filix-femina / Lady Fern

A lacy, upright habit characterizes this most common and variable native fern which reaches 18-24". It is a lovely lime green with reddish stems, and is as delicate-looking as is possible. It can handle quite a bit of sun or shade in soil that is either too dry or too wet. Plant 18" apart.

Zones 3 - 8



Gold = Sun, Green = Shade + Level deer resistance (see page 6 for program details)

Athyrium filix-femina 'Lady in Red'

Red-stemmed Lady Fern

Massed in the woodland border or shady perennial garden, the delicate native 'Lady in Red' fern is unsurpassed. It is tough and easy to grow, while offering soft texture and beauty. Vibrant burgundy color runs through the stems, contrasting not only with the 30-36" tall lime green fronds, but with other shade lovers such as purple-leaved Heucheras, blue or variegated Carex, any number of Hostas, and Polygonatum 'Variegatum'.

Plant 18" apart.

Zones 3 - 8



Athyrium niponicum var. pictum

Japanese Painted Fern Perennial Plant of the Year® 2004

Often considered the most decorative of ferns, this deciduous 18" Oriental beauty blends gray-green fronds with wine-red stems. It is slow spreading and thrives in shade or partial shade where soil is moist but well-drained. Its tri-color fronds emerge in the spring making it a perfect companion for early bulbs. Plant 18" apart.

Zones 3 - 8



Athyrium otophorum

Limelight Lady Fern / Eared Lady Fern

The new foliage of this fern emerges lime green with reddish-pink stems and midribs. Mature foliage is darker green and the combination of old and new is quite attractive in containers or the mixed shady border. Clumping foliage grows 15-24" tall. Combine with Helleborus and Hosta.

Plant 18" apart.

Zones 5 - 9



Cyrtomium falcatum

'Rochfordianum'

Japanese Holly Fern

Glossy, dark green leaves closely resemble Holly leaves and are so striking that we decided to include this evergreen fern that requires moderate wintertime temperatures to thrive. Fronds can be 24-30" in length. The leaf margins are coarsely fringed, grow thickly and quickly, and are definitely eye-catching.

Plant 18" apart.

Zones 6 - 10



Dennstaedtia punctilobula

Hayscented Fern

Hayscented fern adds delicate texture to the understory when massed in the woodland garden. This groundcover fern will spread rapidly to fill a large area with its lime green deciduous lacy fronds. A native of wooded slopes, open woods and open meadows it can tolerate sun if kept moist. The fronds smell like fresh-cut hay if crushed. Height is 24-36".

Plant 18" apart.

Zones 3 - 8



Dryopteris x australis

Dixie Wood Fern

This naturally occurring hybrid of the Log Fern and the Southern Wood Fern is rich in color and is semi-evergreen with large, erect, tall fronds at 4-5' when fully grown. This is a particularly big, strong fern for the woodland garden, or for naturalizing, and is found throughout the Southeastern U.S.

Plant 24-36" apart.

Zones 5 - 9





Dryopteris erythrosora 'Brilliance'

Brilliance Autumn Fern

So named due to its copper color when young, the semi-evergreen Autumn Fern matures to a lovely dark green. The 24" upright fronds take on an autumn color again in the fall. They thrive in open or dappled shade. All ferns grow best in soils with a high organic matter content. **Plant 18" apart.**

Zones 5 - 9    



Dryopteris marginalis
Evergreen Wood Fern

Also commonly called the Leatherwood Fern or Marginal Shield Fern, this native clump-grower has dark green, upright fronds between 2-3' in length, and handles shade or part shade. Try with Hosta 'Great Expectations', Aralia 'Sun King' and Mertensia virginica. **Plant 18" apart.**

Zones 2 - 8     



Matteuccia pensylvanica
Ostrich Fern

Stately, upright 3-4' fronds resembling ostrich feathers grow by underground runners that die back in winter and reappear vigorously the next spring. The native Ostrich Fern tolerates wet soil conditions so give it room in moist, rich soil and it will provide erosion control as well as a dramatic effect. While it prefers open shade, it will tolerate sun in swampy areas. **Plant 18" apart.**

Zones 2 - 8     



Onoclea sensibilis
Sensitive Fern

This fern gains its common name from its sensitivity to frost, dying back quickly when first touched by frost. It is tough and free running, spreading in moist soil where its 18" height makes it ideal as a shady groundcover in restoration projects that might include wet meadows, swamps, and open woods. Somewhat sun-tolerant, but must be kept evenly moist. **Plant 18" apart.**

Zones 2 - 10     



Gold = Sun, Green = Shade + Level deer resistance (see page 6 for program details)



Osmunda regalis
Royal Fern

This slow-spreading native fern can be grown in wet soil in sun to partial shade. Its lance-shaped, dark green fronds grow tall and erect between 3'-4'. The Royal Fern will do well in wet areas. Combine with Ligularia 'The Rocket' and Hosta 'Elegans'.
Plant 18" apart.

Zones 2 - 10



Polystichum polyblepharum
Tassel Fern

Striking beauty and reliable hardiness are the complementary qualities of this 18-24" evergreen fern. Its dark green, shiny fronds form a rounded rosette shape. Showy and easy to grow, it prefers full to partial shade.
Plant 18" apart.

Zones 5 - 8



Polystichum tsus-simense
Korean Rock Fern

Considering that ferns have outlived the dinosaurs, it's not surprising that this adaptation is evident in this neat, compact evergreen fern. It is of modest size at 12" and appreciates protection from winter winds. Gorgeous with the blue-green leaves of Hosta 'Frances Williams'.
Plant 18" apart.

Zones 5 - 8



Osmunda cinnamomea
Cinnamon Fern

Cinnamon Fern, at 3-4', makes an excellent backdrop in a woodland garden where it likes an acid soil with constant moisture, and can even handle wet, swampy land. Its name derives from the erect brown fronds that appear in the spring. Pale green initially, foliage darkens during the summer, turning a rich brown by autumn. It can handle some direct sun if the soil is kept moist.
Plant 18" apart.

Zones 2 - 10

Polystichum acrostichoides
Christmas Fern

Similar in looks to the familiar Boston Fern, this dark green, evergreen, native fern can tolerate rocky soil common to our forests. It thrives in shade, but will tolerate some sun if it stays moist. Its 2' fronds are sometimes used in Christmas decorations.

As Nancy Mickey notes in 'What's Native' "settlers moving from the east coast to Kansas and Texas would keep seeing this remarkable fern in the woods and along shady pathways. Evergreen in winter, it was sometimes the only plant that was still green. From their Native American friends, they learned to use this plant for medicine and food. Settlers from New England carried their holiday traditions to their new homes, using the foliage of Christmas fern in holiday decorations".
Plant 18" apart.



Zones 3 - 9



Thelypteris decursive-pinnata
Japanese Beech Fern

Stiffly erect, lime green fronds characterize this non-evergreen fern, with its elegantly drooping tips. It is a tough fern of moderate height at 2'. Use in the shade garden with Heuchera 'Green Spice', Hosta 'Halcyon' and Iris cristata 'Tennessee White'.
Plant 18" apart.

Zones 4 - 10