



FERNS

Ferns make useful and beautiful additions to shady areas in the home landscape. They are particularly attractive in woodland gardens. Their fine-leaved, lacy appearance makes them excellent companions to perennials that have broad leaves such as hostas and brunneras. They thrive in consistently moist, organically rich soil, preferring acidic pH's, but some will tolerate neutral to slightly alkaline soil as well. They generally are not bothered by disease or pests. Most ferns are deciduous, their crowns dying back in the winter, but some are evergreen and remain attractive throughout the year.

Adiantum pedatum

Maidenhair Fern, Five Fingered Fern

Height 12-18 inches, 1 to 1.5 feet wide
Deciduous; native to North America. Lacy green fronds with black wiry stems.

Medium shade, but tolerates some sun. Does best in rich soil with ample water. Spreads slowly by creeping rhizomes to form clumps. High summer heat may cause fronds to turn brown, especially if soil dries out; very useful in rock gardens, native plant gardens; attractive as an edger.

Dryopteris erythrosora

Autun Fern, Japanese Shield Fern

Height 24 inches 1.5 to 2.5 feet wide

Part to full shade; medium to wet soil; tolerates clay soil but grows best in acidic, humus-rich soil with consistent moisture; spreads by rhizomes; slow growing. Avoid windy sites; deciduous; combines well with hostas and astilbes ;

very impressive in masses. Fronds are warm rosy-brown when young; glossy rich green at maturity with scarlet spore capsules on undersides.

Athyrium goeringianum 'Pictum'

Japanese Painted Fern

Height 18 inches, 1.5 to 2 feet wide
Silvery-gray and green variegated fronds with red stems. Partial shade; rich, damp soil. Does not tolerate dry soils; naturalizes well by short, branching rhizomes, effective in shady areas by streams and ponds. Best color with either early morning or late afternoon sun.

Matteuccia struthiopteris (M. pensylvanica/ similar)

Ostrich Fern

Height 3-5 feet
Lustrous dark green. Grows from a central clump, spreading at top. Light shade. Grows best in moist, slightly acid soil (pH 5.5 to 6.5) that is high in organic material.

Visit our website at <https://extension.wsu.edu/spokane/master-gardener-program/home-lawn-and-garden/>
e-mail your garden questions to: mastergardener@spokanecounty.org

Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office.

Athyrium filix-femina

Lady Fern

Height 15-24 inches 1 to 2.5 feet wide
Bright yellow-green deeply cut fronds. Native to northern areas of North America; easy to grow in shady rock gardens, woodland gardens, and shady areas along streams and ponds. Easily damaged, delicate foliage. Provide shelter from winds to prevent fronds from breaking. Spreads by rhizomes; partial to full shade; place out of traffic. Prefers well-drained moist soil, but is more tolerant of drier soils than most ferns.

Osmundastrum cinnemomeum

Cinnamon Fern Height 2-5 feet, 2 to 3 feet wide
Deep waxy-green foliage. Fertile fronds turn cinnamon brown as spores mature. Part to full shade; native to Missouri; excellent along ponds and streams, in water gardens and bogs, shaded borders, woodland gardens, and native plant gardens. Requires a slight acid soil (pH 5.5 - 6.5). Keep evenly moist. Tolerates competitive roots. Hummingbirds use fuzz from young fronds to line their nests.

Osmunda regalis

Royal Fern

Height 4-6 feet, 2 to 3 feet wide
Foliage resembles locust tree leaves; has fertile spikes at the tips of the stronger fronds. Part to full shade; avoid full sun exposure in areas of hot summers; attractive along streams and ponds in shady areas, woodland gardens, and native plant gardens. Requires acid soil and constant moisture.

Polystictum acrostichoides

Christmas Fern

Height 1-2 feet 1 to 2 feet wide
Native of Missouri; requires well-drained soil especially in the winter to prevent crown rot; will grow in shady areas by walls. An evergreen fern with deep green fronds, 2 feet long. Prefers shade and moist, woodland site, but will tolerate a drier soil.

Polystictum munitum

Western Sword Fern

Height 2-6 feet
Native to western North America; very resilient and tolerates dry soil but flourishes in consistently moist, rich, well-drained soil; shade to part-shade. An evergreen fern with dark green leathery fronds 2 to 3½ feet long.

Polystictum setiferum 'Diversilabum'

Soft Shield Fern, Soft Divided Shield Fern

Height 1-1.5 feet, 1.5 to 2 feet wide
An evergreen fern with dark green feathery fronds. Part to full shade. Prefers a drier soil than most ferns. Mistakenly called Alaska Fern; grows well in zones 6 to 8; it is an English import.