



J&L Garden Center

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HARDY FERNS

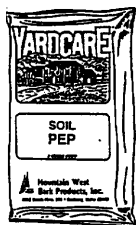
Ferns are valuable garden plants of great dependability and beauty. Their leaves, known as fronds, can be lacy or leathery, plain green or variegated. Ferns can provide a long season of interest. Ferns do not flower but their foliage is extremely pleasing in the shade gardens. Ferns offer trouble free elegance, rarely suffering from pests and diseases.

Ferns were tremendously popular in Victorian times, and many wealthy British had ferneries - shady garden areas devoted to fern collections. As we become more aware of the values of foliage texture in modern landscapes, we are re-discovering the refreshing diversity of hardy ferns. Naturally occurring ferns inhabit the cool, shady woodland areas, in the protection naturally provided by trees.



Planting Ferns

Ferns require moist, humus rich soil. Roto till four to six inches of **well-rotted manure** or **Soil Pep** into the entire garden before planting. This mulch helps to increase the moisture-holding ability of the soil and helps to increase the soil acidity. Most ferns do not like hot temperatures, low humidity, or dry winds. Plant ferns in cool, shady areas that are somewhat protected from winds.

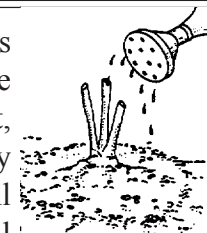


Ferns grow well on the north and east side of houses, fences, and sheds. Ferns can also grow in other locations if you can change the environment to match the fern's needs. Ferns can grow well under trees and shrubs, if they are properly planted and cared for. Shrubs and trees may have roots close to the surface that can rob nutrients and water from the fern's roots. You may have to water and fertilize your ferns more often in these areas than you would need to in other flower gardens, to have them flourish. Mulch your ferns once a year to help improve the soil, to keep the roots cool, and to help the soil retain moisture.

Ferns do not like to be moved or transplanted, so plan and prepare your gardens before planting them. Most ferns do not grow well the first year planted. Don't be discouraged if



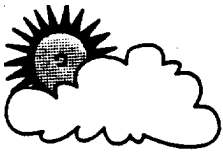
your fern loses most, or all, of its fronds the first summer. If they do lose all their fronds, keep the roots moist, but do not keep them wet because they do not need much water. The roots will grow new fronds and the plants will look great next spring. Ferns look best if they are trimmed and groomed occasionally. Remove any damaged or dead fronds close to the ground. Trim ferns lightly all summer if needed. Don't trim ferns in the fall or winter; wait until the new growth appears in the spring to remove any winter injured fronds. The older fronds protect new buds during the winter.



Fertilizing Ferns

Ferns, as a rule, need very little fertilizer: just make sure the soil is very rich in humus. Do not use fresh manure as a fertilizer, it may be too strong and may burn the plants. Apply a little slow release fertilizer, such as **bone meal** or **blood meal**, early each spring. An occasional application of **Miracid** fertilizer during the summer will help acidify the soil and give your fern a light feeding. **Never apply any fertilizer directly to the fronds, the fertilizer will turn them brown.**





Hardy Fern Varieties

There are many varieties of hardy ferns to choose from. Many of the native species that grow in our mountains are not available to buy, but listed below are some of the hardy species that should grow in your yard, if they are planted in just the "right spot". Choose one, two, or more varieties to add color, variety and interest to your flower gardens.

Maidenhair Fern -- *Adiantum pedatum* Zone 3

Very delicate, fan-shaped fronds. Stems are shiny and black, with light green lacy leaves. Suitable for rock gardens or under shrubs. Grows twelve to twenty-four inches tall and spreads twelve to eighteen inches wide.



Crested Lady Fern -- *Athyrium filix femina* 'Cristatum' - Zone 3

Fronds are bright green in color and grow on stiff stems that emerge from a crown at the base of the plant. Leaflets are very refined with crested growth at the end of each of the leaflets. Plants grow to be three to four feet tall and require shade.

Japanese Painted Fern -- *Athyrium niponicum* 'Pictum' Zone 4

Arching fronds are olive green with a metallic-gray sheen. Leaflets are purplish at base and silvery green at the tips. This fern adds a bright touch to the shade garden. Plants grows twelve to eighteen inches tall. Spreads eighteen inches wide.



Autumn Fern, Japanese Shield Fern -- *Dryopteris erythrospra* Zone 5

This dwarf fern grows to be eighteen to twenty four inches tall. Autumn Fern spreads by underground stems. Young papery fronds are reddish when young and the mature foliage is deep green and deeply cut. This fern prefers shade.

Wood Fern -- *Dryopteris carthusian* - Zone 5

Very hardy variety that is easy to grow. The fronds are often used by florists in cut flower arrangements. Grows two to three feet tall.



Leather Wood Fern -- *Dryopteris marginalis* Zone 4

A native species, good for shady rock gardens. This variety forms a medium-sized clump of green fronds. Good for naturalizing.

Ostrich Fern -- *Matteuccia pensylvanica* Zone 1

Vigorous grower with very large lacy lance-shaped fronds. Fronds grow between 4-6' high with fountain-shaped clumps growing 1-2' wide. This fern prefers semi-shade, lots of water, and rich soil. This variety spreads rapidly, once established in the garden. This variety is perhaps the best and easiest fern to grow, especially for the beginner.



Royal Fern -- *Osmunda regalis* 'Purpurascens' Zone 3

A truly unique and spectacular fern. This forms a large crown, sending out a ring of arching leather green frond with contrasting red stems. This fern grows three to five feet tall.

Alaskan Fern, Soft Shield Fern -- *Polystichum setiferum* zone 3

This fern flourishes in shady areas. It has narrow, lance-shaped fronds that grow to be two feet long. The fronds have feathery, dark green leaflets. It is a very hardy plant with a tropical appearance. This variety is excellent for shaded rock gardens and in annual flower gardens. Use tuberous begonias, hosta, caladiums, or impatiens along with this fern.



Christmas Fern -- *Polystichum acrostichoides* Zone 4

This native species has leathery dark green fronds. They have very dependable evergreen fronds, usually available for decorations during the Christmas season. Grows twelve to eighteen inches tall.

Woodsia Fern -- *Woodsia obtusa* Zone 4

This little fern will tolerate sun better than other varieties. Forms a clump of sword-shaped, bright green fronds. Grows twelve inches tall.