

HOME GROUNDS FACT SHEET





Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Nassau County



Horticulture Center
Demonstration & Community Gardens
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Ferns

Commonly Native or Worthy of Cultivation



Common Name <i>Botanical Name</i>	Fronde Length (Inches)	Sun or Shade		Remarks
Northern Maidenhair Fern <i>Adiantum pedatum</i>	12 – 30	Shade		Keep well drained but medium moist.
Ebony Spleenwort <i>Asplenium platyneuron</i>	8 – 18	Shade		Moist, well-drained, humus rich to rocky soil.
Maidenhair Spleenwort <i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>	4 – 7	Shade		Needs moist atmosphere. Evergreen. Plant shallow. 
Lady Fern <i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>	12 – 24	Sun or shade		Yellow-green leaves. Stems pinkish in spring.
Japanese Painted Fern <i>Athyrium niponicum</i> 'Pictum'	20 – 40	Shade		Showy with silvery gray fronds.
Eared Lady Fern <i>Athyrium thelypteroides</i>	12 – 18	Shade		Young leaves chartreuse. Moist soil.
Silvery Glade Fern <i>Athyrium thelypteroides</i>	18 – 48	Shade/semi-shade		Dimorphic. Neutral to acidic soil.
Fragile Fern <i>Cystopteris fragilis</i>	5 – 16	Shade		Plants become dormant when soil is dry. Appreciates some lime.
Hay-scented Fern <i>Dennstaedtia punctilobula</i>	15 - 30	Sun		May be too aggressive.
Narrow-leaved Spleenwort <i>Diplazium pycnocarpon</i> (Syn. <i>Athyrium pycnocarpon</i>)	24 – 36	Shade		Use good soil for good growth.
Northern Wood Fern <i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>	16 – 30	Shade		Evergreen. Neutral to acidic moist soil. Variable species.
Male Fern <i>Dryopteris expansa</i>	24 – 48	Shade or sun		Large plants for accent or a woodland setting.
Goldie's Wood Fern <i>Dryopteris goldiana</i>	36 – 48	Shade		Vertical accent. Humus rich soil.

A-2-25 LB(MG) revised MD(MG)
reviewed RT 1/03

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Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

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Common Name <i>Botanical Name</i>	Frond Length (Inches)	Sun or Shade	Remarks
Leather Wood Fern <i>Dryopteris marginalis</i>	18 – 30	Shade	Evergreen. In planting, do not bury the rootstock.
Toothed Wood Fern <i>Dryopteris carthusiana</i>	12 – 36	Shade	Lacy fronds. Commonly used by florists.
Oak Fern <i>Gymnocarpium dryopteris</i>	9 – 12	Shade	Moist, humus rich acidic soil. Use with spring flowering bulbs.
Ostrich Fern <i>Matteuccia struthiopteris</i>	24 - 72	Shade	Do not plant deeply. Prefers steady moisture.
Sensitive Fern <i>Onoclea sensibilis</i>	12 – 36	Sun or shade	Spreads rapidly. Does well in sun if kept moist.
Cinnamon Fern <i>Osmunda cinnamomea</i>	30 - 60	Shade or partial shade	Has black exposed rootstock. Likes moist, acidic soils.
Interrupted Fern <i>Osmunda claytoniana</i>	24 – 48	Sun or shade	Easily cultivated. Moist acidic soils.
Royal Fern <i>Osmunda regalis</i>	24 – 72	Partial shade	Do not plant deeply. 
Purple Cliff Brake <i>Pellaea atropurpurea</i>	8 – 20	Sun or shade	Rare. Plant shallow. Rock garden. Appreciates some lime.
Common Polypody <i>Polypodium vulgare</i>	3 – 10	Sun or shade	Forms dense mats on cliffs.
Christmas Fern <i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i>	12 –24	Sun or shade	Evergreen. Common. Easy to grow.
Braun's Holly Fern <i>Polystichum braunii</i>	10 –28	Shade	Semi-evergreen. 
Soft Shield Fern <i>Polystichum setiferum</i>	18 – 48	Shade	Evergreen. Best in slightly moist, acid to neutral soil.
Bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	18 – 24	Sun or shade	Often becomes weed. Plant deeply. Sandy, well-drained acid soil.
New York Fern <i>Thelypteris noveboracensis</i>	12 – 24	Shade	Creeping. Very strong grower.
Blunt-lobed Woodsia <i>Woodsia obtusa</i>	5 – 16	Shade	Plant in front of other ferns. Easily grown in mixed garden or rock garden.
Netted Chain Fern <i>Woodwardia areolata</i>	12 – 24	Shade	Rare. Prefers moist conditions.
Virginia Chain Fern <i>Woodwardia virginica</i>	18 - 24	Shade	Likes very moist areas, as near a stream or pond.
Reference: "Ferns for American Gardens" by John Mickel, NY Botanical Garden, 1994.			