# Rattlesnake Fern

***Botrychium virginianum***



*Rattlesnake Fern*
*Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder*

Height: 18 inches

Spread: 24 inches

Sunlight: ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 2

Other Names: Virginia Grape Fern

**Description:**

This is a common native fern whose clustered sporangia resembles a snake's rattle; prefers moist, shady areas; great for a woodland garden or along shaded borders

**Ornamental Features**

Rattlesnake Fern's attractive deeply cut ferny pinnately compound leaves emerge light green in spring, turning green in color on a plant with an upright spreading habit of growth. The foliage often turns brown in fall.

**Landscape Attributes**

Rattlesnake Fern is an herbaceous fern with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other garden plants with less refined foliage.

This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and should not require much pruning, except when necessary, such as to remove dieback. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Rattlesnake Fern is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Container Planting

**Planting & Growing**

Rattlesnake Fern will grow to be about 18 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 24 inches. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 4 years. As an herbaceous perennial, this plant will usually die back to the crown each winter, and will regrow from the base each spring. Be careful not to disturb the crown in late winter when it may not be readily seen!

This plant does best in partial shade to full shade. Keep it well away from hot, dry locations that receive direct afternoon sun or which get reflected sunlight, such as against the south side of a white wall. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. This species is native to parts of North America.

Rattlesnake Fern is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. It is often used as a 'filler' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination, providing a canvas of foliage against which the larger thriller plants stand out. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.