Austral Gem Bird's Nest Fern

Asplenium 'Austral Gem'



Austral Gem Bird's Nest Fern foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 18 inches

Spread: 18 inches

Sunlight: ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 8

Other Names: Spleenwort

Description:

This sterile variety produces feathery, deep green glossy foliage with a waxy cuticle that prevents drying; does not produce messy spores, making it ideal for indoor containers

Ornamental Features

Austral Gem Bird's Nest Fern is primarily valued in the garden for its cascading habit of growth. Its attractive glossy ferny bipinnately compound leaves remain dark green in color throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Austral Gem Bird's Nest Fern is an herbaceous fern with a shapely form and gracefully arching fronds. It brings an extremely fine and delicate texture to the garden composition and should be used to full effect.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and usually looks its best without pruning, although it will tolerate pruning. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Austral Gem Bird's Nest Fern is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting
- Hanging Baskets

Planting & Growing

Austral Gem Bird's Nest Fern will grow to be about 18 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 18 inches. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 15 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 particular about its soil conditions, with a strong preference for rich, acidic soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone over the growing season to conserve soil moisture. This particular variety is an interspecific hybrid, and parts of it are known to be toxic to humans and animals, so care should be exercised in planting it around children and pets. It can be propagated by division; however, as a cultivated variety, be aware that it may be subject to certain restrictions or prohibitions on propagation.

Austral Gem Bird's Nest Fern is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor containers and hanging baskets. It is often used as a 'filler' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination, providing a canvas of foliage against which the 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.