Rabbit's Foot Fern

Polypodium aureum



Rabbit's Foot Fern foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Spacing: 30 inches

Sunlight: ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 8

Other Names: Hare's Foot Fern, Serpent Fern, syn. Phlebodium

Description:

A clumping fern variety producing irregular, arching fronds of gray-green foliage; a nice groundcover for a woodland area; great in hanging baskets or containers, for indoors or out

Ornamental Features

Rabbit's Foot Fern's attractive ferny pinnately compound leaves emerge chartreuse in spring, turning grayish green in color the rest of the year on a plant with an arching habit of growth.

Landscape Attributes

Rabbit's Foot Fern is a dense herbaceous evergreen fern with a shapely form and gracefully arching fronds. 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. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Suckering

Rabbit's Foot Fern is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Rabbit's Foot Fern will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 30 inches apart. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 20 years. As an evegreen perennial, this plant will typically keep its form and foliage year-round.

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 does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is native to parts of North America. It can be propagated by division.

Rabbit's Foot Fern is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor containers and hanging baskets. Because of its height, it is often used as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.