Lady Fern

Athyrium filix-femina

Height: 18 inches

Spread: 24 inches

Sunlight: ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 2

Description:

An excellent choice for adding fine texture to garden beds and borders; features a low growing habit with arching green fronds throughout the season; easy to grow, requiring little to no maintenance; prefers partial to full shaded areas

Ornamental Features

Lady Fern is primarily valued in the garden for its cascading habit of growth. Its ferny bipinnately compound leaves remain green in color throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Lady Fern is a dense 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.

Lady Fern is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens



Lady Fern foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Lady Fern
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Lady Fern will grow to be about 18 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 24 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 a location that gets morning sunlight but is shaded from the hot afternoon sun, although it will also grow in full shade. Keep it 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 moist to wet soil, and will even tolerate some standing water. 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 species is not originally from North America, 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.