Soft Tree Fern

Dicksonia antarctica

Height: 15 feet

Spread: 12 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 8

Other Names: Tasmanian Tree Fern, Man Fern

Description:

This sturdy variety produces large, dark green, roughly textured fronds that rise out of the trunk and arch down as they mature; prefers bright, dappled shade; do not allow to dry out; a stunning accent or container plant

Ornamental Features

Soft Tree Fern's attractive large ferny bipinnately compound leaves emerge chartreuse in spring, turning dark green in color the rest of the year on a plant with an arching habit of growth.

Landscape Attributes

Soft Tree Fern is an open spreading 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. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Soft Tree Fern is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting



Soft Tree Fern
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Soft Tree Fern foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Soft Tree Fern will grow to be about 15 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 12 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 6 feet from the ground. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 60 years or more. As an evegreen perennial, this plant will typically keep its form and foliage year-round.

This plant performs well in both full sun and full shade. 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. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in both summer and winter to conserve soil moisture and protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is not originally from North America.

Soft Tree Fern is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. 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.