Rigid Tassel Fern

Polystichum rigens



Rigid Tassel Fern foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 24 inches

Spread: 24 inches

Spacing: 18 inches

Sunlight: ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 5

Other Names: Holly Fern

Description:

A stunning fern for the shady rock garden or border edge; features funnel shaped clumps of stiff, bright green new fronds that turn darker green when mature; cut fronds are great for flower arrangements

Ornamental Features

Rigid Tassel Fern is primarily valued in the garden for its cascading habit of growth. Its attractive spiny ferny bipinnately compound leaves emerge light green in spring, turning forest green in color the rest of the year.

Landscape Attributes

Rigid Tassel Fern is an 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 is a relatively low maintenance plant, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. 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.

Rigid Tassel Fern is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Rigid Tassel Fern will grow to be about 24 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 24 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 18 inches apart. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 15 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 requires an evenly moist well-drained soil for optimal growth, but will die in 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, 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.