Maidenhair Spleenwort

Asplenium trichomanes



Maidenhair Spleenwort
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 6 inches

Spread: 12 inches

Spacing: 6 inches

Sunlight: ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 5

Other Names: Common Spleenwort, Waterwort

Description:

An elegant rosette of long, glossy black stems adorned with bright green rounded leaves; loves shaded areas, and is quite tough once established; great for containers, rock gardens or wall crevices; propagated by sowing spores or division

Ornamental Features

Maidenhair Spleenwort is primarily valued in the garden for its cascading habit of growth. Its attractive small glossy round pinnately compound leaves emerge light green in spring, turning bluish-green in color with hints of chartreuse throughout the season. The black stems are very colorful and add to the overall interest of the plant.

Landscape Attributes

Maidenhair Spleenwort is an herbaceous 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 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.

Maidenhair Spleenwort is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Container Planting
- Hanging Baskets

Planting & Growing

Maidenhair Spleenwort will grow to be only 6 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 12 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 6 inches apart. Its foliage tends to remain low and dense right to the ground. It grows at a medium 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 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 particular about its soil conditions, with a strong preference for rich, alkaline soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. This species is native to parts of North America. It can be propagated by division.

Maidenhair Spleenwort 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.