Limestone Wood Fern

Dryopteris mindshelkensis



Limestone Wood Fern
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 24 inches

Spread: 24 inches

Sunlight: ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 6

Other Names: Rigid Buckler Fern, syn. Dryopteris submontana

Description:

A slow growing, limestone loving fern with a spreading, arching habit; new foliage emerges a bright lime green, turning dull gray-green as the fronds mature; keep evenly moist; an excellent choice for rock gardens, or well drained wooded areas

Ornamental Features

Limestone Wood Fern is primarily valued in the garden for its cascading habit of growth. Its attractive fragrant ferny bipinnately compound leaves emerge lime green in spring, turning grayish green in color throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Limestone Wood 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 should be cut back in late fall in preparation for winter. 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.

Limestone Wood Fern is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens

Planting & Growing

Limestone Wood Fern will grow to be about 24 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 50 years or more. 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! As this plant tends to go dormant in summer, it is best interplanted with late-season bloomers to hide the dying foliage.

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 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 sandy, alkaline 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.