Slender Brake Fern

Pteris ensiformis

Height: 16 inches

Spread: 16 inches

Sunlight: ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 9

Other Names: Silver Lace Fern, Sword Brake Fern

Description:

An interesting, upright and arching mound of deeply cut, threadlike silver leaves with dark green edges; a great garden accent or container plant; protect from wind



Slender Brake Fern in full
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Slender Brake Fern is primarily valued in the garden for its cascading habit of growth. Its attractive deeply cut narrow compound leaves remain silver in color with prominent dark green tips and tinges of chartreuse throughout the year.



Slender Brake Fern foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Slender Brake 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 plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, 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.

Slender Brake Fern is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting
- Hanging Baskets

Planting & Growing

Slender Brake Fern will grow to be about 16 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 16 inches. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 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 prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. 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 highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by division.

Slender Brake Fern 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.