Robust Male Fern

Dryopteris x complexa



Robust Male Fern foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 4 feet

Spread: 4 feet

Sunlight: ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 4

Other Names: form. Dryopteris filix-mas 'Undulata Robusta'

Description:

A vigorous fertile hybrid of the Male Fern that is exceptionally hardy, fast growing, and adaptable to varied conditions; well developed, graceful fronds have a bold, feathery look; perfect for woodland naturalizing or erosion control on slopes



Robust Male Fern in spring
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Robust Male Fern is primarily valued in the landscape or garden for its cascading habit of growth. Its attractive ferny bipinnately compound leaves remain light green in color throughout the year.

Landscape Attributes

Robust Male Fern is an herbaceous evergreen 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.

Robust Male Fern is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Robust Male Fern will grow to be about 4 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 4 feet. 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. 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 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 particular about its soil conditions, with a strong preference for rich, acidic soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone over the growing season to conserve soil moisture. This particular variety is an interspecific hybrid, 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; however, as a cultivated variety, be aware that it may be subject to certain restrictions or prohibitions on propagation.