Marsh Fern

Thelypteris palustris



Marsh Fern foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 24 inches

Spread: 15 inches

Spacing: 12 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 2

Other Names: Maiden Fern

Description:

A beautiful native fern that naturalizes well in wet or boggy areas, can be used in a garden setting as long as the soil is moist and mulched, be careful with its wandering ways

Ornamental Features

Marsh Fern is primarily valued in the garden for its cascading habit of growth. Its ferny pinnately compound leaves emerge green in spring, turning olive green in color. The foliage often turns harvest gold in fall. The black stems can be quite attractive.

Landscape Attributes

Marsh Fern is an 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 plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and should be cut back in late fall in preparation for winter. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Spreading

Marsh Fern is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Marsh Fern will grow to be about 24 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 15 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 12 inches apart. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 8 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 performs well in both full sun and full shade. It is quite adaptable, prefering to grow in average to wet conditions, and will even tolerate some 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. This species is native to parts of North America. It can be propagated by division.