Hen and Chicken Fern

Asplenium bulbiferum



Hen and Chicken Fern foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 24 inches

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 7

Description:

Elegant, long, delicate looking fronds with small bulbils which develop on the upper surface, these can be replanted; best suited to damp shady areas but is very adaptable and makes a great potted plant

Ornamental Features

Hen and Chicken Fern is primarily valued in the garden for its cascading habit of growth. Its attractive ferny bipinnately compound leaves remain chartreuse in color throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Hen and Chicken 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 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.

Hen and Chicken Fern is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens

Planting & Growing

Hen and Chicken Fern will grow to be about 24 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. 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 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 prefers to grow in moist to wet soil, and will even tolerate some 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, acidic 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.