

Choosing the Right Fern for Your Site

Whether you have a secluded pond, sunny rock wall or a serene woodland setting, you can find an assortment of ferns to add beauty to any spot in the garden. Most ferns do well in part shade or dappled sunlight, but there are many which will do well with quite a bit of sun, provided they get enough water. Shade loving ferns appreciate an organic, evenly moist, well drained soil. If your soil is heavy on the clay or sandy side you can add compost or other organic matter to help balance it out. (If you use manure, be sure it is well rotted or aged.) Ferns require minimal maintenance throughout the year. Once in the garden, ferns in general do not require additional fertilizer. They will appreciate leaf litter from surrounding trees and an occasional top dressing of a compost mulch. Unless you want to share a fern with a friend these easy going plants rarely need to be divided. Deciduous ferns can be trimmed as the fronds yellow in late fall and early winter. Evergreen ferns do best if the older fronds are trimmed off in late winter or early spring, just before the new fronds emerge. As with other perennials, the best time to plant is during the spring and fall when the rain is plentiful. Ferns come in an amazing range of texture, color, sizes and shapes. Their ease and versatility make them an essential part of any well rounded garden.