Royal Fern

Osmunda regalis

Height: 5 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Spacing: 24 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 3

Ornamental Features

Royal Fern features bold spikes of brown flowers rising above the foliage in mid summer. Its enormous oval bipinnately compound leaves are green in color. The foliage often turns tan in fall.

Landscape Attributes

Royal Fern is an herbaceous perennial with a shapely form and gracefully arching foliage. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other garden plants with finer foliage.

This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Spreading

Royal Fern is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Groundcover
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Bog Gardens



Royal Fern foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Royal Fern
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Royal Fern will grow to be about 4 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 24 inches apart. It grows at a fast 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 performs well in both full sun and full shade. It prefers to grow in moist to wet soil, and will even tolerate some standing water. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. 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 species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by division.



Royal Fern in spring
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder