

Featured Shade Plants

Botanical Name: *Matteuccia struthiopteris*

Common Name: Ostrich Fern, Shuttlecock Fern

Form: vase shaped upright, deciduous fern attaining a usual height of 2 to 6 feet; but can grow to 9 feet in optimal conditions

Culture: does best in humus-rich, evenly moist soil in light to full shade, although can tolerate some sun

Foliage: **sterile fronds** are large, green, oblanceolate, and usually up to 60" long, 12" wide, forming symmetrical, vase-like cluster; leaf stalk is black, to 12", flattened at base, becoming deeply grooved, with pale orange-brown scales; **fertile fronds** are dense and rigid, arising from the centre of the clump in mid to late summer and persist through winter; green in colour maturing to dark brown.

Flowers: not applicable

Uses: can be used in the garden as individual specimen plant or in quantity; gives elevation and variety of colour to a uniform dark green garden area, but choose location carefully, as it grows and spreads quickly and can overwhelm more delicate plants; good in wooded areas or around ponds; young fronds (fiddleheads) can be collected in spring for eating when they are two to three inches tall and still tightly coiled, but remember to cook them, as they are poisonous; fertile fronds are attractive when used in winter bouquets

General: very vigorous fern and easy to cultivate; spreads readily by underground runners from the stem base

Habitat: zones 6 to 8



Botanical Name: *Thelypteris decursive-pinnata* (syn. *Phegopteris decursive-pinnata*)

Common Name: Japanese Beech Fern

Form: arching strongly upright clumping form reaching height and spread of 1 to 2 feet; most information says it is deciduous, however, Mike Lascelle and some other sources say it can be semi or even fully evergreen in the Vancouver area in sheltered spots

Culture: prefers moist, slightly acidic, humus-rich, well-drained soil in full to partial shade; can be grown in some sun, but foliage will become brilliant yellow-green in colour

Foliage: lush soft apple or chartreuse green fronds produce a graceful form; irregularly spaced, narrow, coarse-textured and spreading; blade tapers at both ends

Flowers: not applicable

Uses: excellent as a ground cover for shaded areas; popular for shaded rock gardens; naturalizes in mixed woodlands; good substitute or replacement for Ostrich Fern

General: new plants produced on short runners away from "mother" plant, but not invasive; easily divided by digging up plant and separating small plants from parent; can eventually produce large colonies, but slowly; native to China and Japan; easy to grow; has a very distinctive look

Habitat: zones 4 to 8

