Maldonado Nursery
120 E. Zipp Rd.
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830.625.1020
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Autumn Fern - New For 2026!

Dryopteris erythrosora

Height: 18 inches

Spread: 18 inches

Sunlight: ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 4b

Other Names: Japanese Red Shield Fern

Description:

Gorgeous dramatic foliage color on spreading plants, ideal for borders, containers or use as groundcover; young papery fronds emerge copper in color and develop to green when mature; easy to grow and drought resistant

Ornamental Features

Autumn Fern is primarily valued in the garden for its broadly spreading habit of growth. Its attractive glossy ferny compound leaves emerge coppery-bronze in spring, turning forest green in color with prominent coppery-bronze tips the rest of the year.

Landscape Attributes

Autumn Fern is a dense herbaceous evergreen fern with a ground-hugging habit of growth. 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 should be cut back in late fall in preparation for winter. 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.

Autumn Fern is recommended for the following landscape applications;



Autumn Fern foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Autumn Fern
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Container Planting



Autumn Fern
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Autumn Fern will grow to be about 18 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 18 inches. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 15 years. As an evegreen perennial, this plant will typically keep its form and foliage year-round.

This plant does best in a location that gets morning sunlight but is shaded from the hot afternoon sun, although it will also grow in full shade. Keep it 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 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 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.

Autumn Fern is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its spreading habit of growth, it is ideally suited for use as a 'spiller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the edges where it can spill gracefully over the pot. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.