Longfellow's Greenhouses

Interrupted Fern

Osmunda claytoniana

Interrupted Fern foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 4 feet

Spread: 4 feet

Spacing: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 3

Ornamental Features

Interrupted Fern is primarily valued in the landscape or garden for its cascading habit of growth. It features bold spikes of brown flowers rising above the foliage in mid summer. Its enormous oval bipinnately compound leaves are lime green in color. The foliage often turns tan in fall.

Landscape Attributes

Interrupted Fern is an herbaceous fern with a shapely form and gracefully arching fronds. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other garden plants with less refined foliage.

This is a high maintenance plant that will require regular care 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;

- Suckering

Interrupted Fern is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Interrupted Fern will grow to be about 4 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 4 feet. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 3 feet 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!

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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 native to parts of North America. It can be propagated by division.

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