

Hen and Chicken Fern



Hen and Chicken Fern *Asplenium bulbiferum*

Height: 24 inches

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ● ●

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Description:

Elegant, long, delicate looking fronds with small bulbils which develop on the upper surface, these can be replanted; best suited to damp shady areas but is very adaptable and makes a great potted plant

Ornamental Features

Hen and Chicken Fern is primarily valued in the garden for its cascading habit of growth. Its attractive ferny bipinnately compound leaves remain chartreuse in color throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Hen and Chicken Fern is an herbaceous annual with a shapely form and gracefully arching foliage. 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 usually looks its best without pruning, although it will tolerate pruning. 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.

Hen and Chicken Fern is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens

Planting & Growing

Hen and Chicken Fern will grow to be about 24 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. Although it's not a true annual, this slow-growing plant can be expected to behave as an annual in our climate if left outdoors over the winter, usually needing replacement the following year. As such, gardeners should take into consideration that it will perform differently than it would in its native habitat.



Hen and Chicken Fern foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Wallitsch Nursery And Garden Center

2608 Hikes Lane
Louisville, KY, 40218
phone: 502-454-3553
www.wallitsch.net

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This plant does best in partial shade to shade. It prefers to grow in moist to wet soil, and will even tolerate some standing water. 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.