

Adiantum pedatum

Northern Maidenhair Fern

Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic

Northern Maidenhair Fern is an elegant ornamental plant with striking black stalks that will not go unnoticed in a shaded border or garden. This native of moist woods in much of the eastern half of North America* has a singular growth habit with its fronds held horizontally in the shape of a fan.



Fern	Fiddleheads, Pinnae, Clump
Height: 1–2½ feet	 
Spread: 1–1½ feet	
Bloom Color: Non-flowering	
Characteristics	
Deciduous perennial with clump-forming habit	
Fiddleheads emerge pink-brown in early spring	
Frond blades are held horizontal to the ground in a fan shape on red-brown-to-black wiry stalks	
Delicately textured, frilly pinnae (leaflets)	
Spores located on outer edges of leaflets	
Spreads slowly by rhizomes to create colonies	
Attributes	
Tolerates dense shade	
No serious pests or diseases	
Deer rarely damage	
Low maintenance	
Herbal uses	
Growing and Maintenance Tips	Excellent Replacement for
Soil Requirements: Acidic (prefers), well-drained	<i>Hedera helix</i> - English Ivy
Light Requirements: Partial Shade, Shade	<i>Liriope spicata</i> - Creeping Lily-Turf
Water Requirements: Moist	<i>Vinca minor</i> - Periwinkle
Intense heat combined with too much sun or dry soil may turn fronds brown	
Use as an accent or edging plant, in shaded borders, or naturalized in woodland gardens	<p>*In the Mid-Atlantic Region: In DE, it is uncommon in the Piedmont and rare in the Coastal Plain. It is native to DC, northern and western MD, and most of PA. In VA, it is common in the mountains, frequent in the Piedmont, and infrequent in the Coastal Plain.</p>
Hardiness: USDA Zones 3–8	
developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria	

Images by Mary Free, Quarry Shade Garden