

Osmundastrum cinnamomeum*

Cinnamon Fern

Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic

Whether on the woodland floor or coming through shade-tolerant ornamentals, Cinnamon Fern fronds are beautiful when they unfurl in spring and then turn vibrant shades of gold and orange in fall. Fossil records date back 75-180 million years. This versatile, easy to grow [native](#) is found frequently to commonly throughout much of the Mid-Atlantic Region.



Fern	Fiddleheads, Fertile & Sterile Fronds, Fall Foliage		
Height: 2–3 feet			
Spread: 2–3 feet			
Bloom Color: Non-flowering			
Characteristics			
Deciduous perennial in vase-shaped clump with massive rootstocks of densely matted, wiry roots			
Woolly hairs cover emerging fiddleheads			
Outward arching, lanceolate , pinnate-pinnatifid , sterile fronds w/ persistent hair tuft at pinna base			
Erect, fertile fronds with bead-like sporangia clusters appear early spring maturing from green to cinnamon, releasing spores, then promptly withering			
Vibrant fall foliage from golden to burnt orange			
Spreads slowly by rhizomes			
Attributes			
Tolerates dense shade and rabbits; no serious pests or diseases; deer rarely damage			
Root fiber used for potting orchids			
Ethnobotanic uses; eating fiddleheads may be unsafe			
Provides food for a few insects, nesting material (woolly fiddlehead covering) for birds, and protective cover when large colonies form			
Growing and Maintenance Tips	Excellent Replacement for		
Soil Requirements : Humus -rich, acidic	<i>Dryopteris erythrosora</i> - Japanese Shield Fern		
Light Requirements : Partial Shade, Shade	Hedera helix - English Ivy		
Water Requirements : Moist, Wet	Liriope spicata - Creeping Liriope		
An excellent fern for the beginning gardener			
Use** as a dramatic accent plant, in rain or woodland gardens, or along fresh water's edge	<div><div>* Formerly classified as <i>Osmunda cinnamomea</i></div><div>** It is suitable for a container with no drainage hole. For eye-catching effect, set plants apart to accentuate their form.</div></div>		
Hardiness : USDA Zones 3–9			

developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria

Images by Mary Free (top), private garden, Arlington, VA and by Elaine Mills, Ladew Gardens, MD & Longwood Gardens, PA



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