



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Rumohra adiantiformis*¹

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Introduction

This evergreen fern has triangular-shaped, dark glossy green, medium-textured leaflets arising from a central clump (Fig. 1). The bold, heavy, leathery fronds, sometimes three feet high, are of unsurpassed keeping quality when cut and are much prized for use in floral arrangements. Plants spread by means of a rusty-red, aboveground stolon and eventually form dense mats of lacy foliage, making Leatherleaf Fern ideal for groundcover use in shaded locations.

General Information

Scientific name: *Rumohra adiantiformis*

Pronunciation: roo-MOR-ruh ad-dee-an-tiff-FOR-miss

Common name(s): Leatherleaf Fern

Family: *Polypodiaceae*

Plant type: perennial; herbaceous

USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: naturalizing; mass planting; border; cut foliage/twigs; edging

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

Height: 1 to 3 feet

Spread: 4 to 5 feet

Plant habit: upright

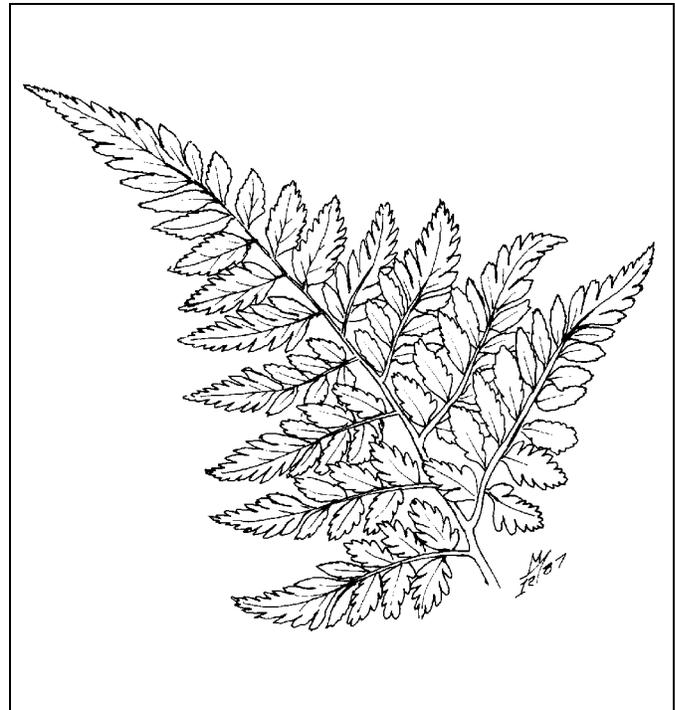


Figure 1. Leatherleaf Fern.

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: slow

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: most emerge from the soil, usually without a stem

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf type: bipinnately compound
Leaf margin: serrate
Leaf shape: ovate
Leaf venation: none, or difficult to see
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: no flowers
Flower characteristic: no flowers

Fruit

Fruit shape: no fruit
Fruit length: no fruit
Fruit cover: no fruit
Fruit color: no fruit
Fruit characteristic: no fruit

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable
Current year stem/twig color: not applicable
Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in the shade
Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; acidic;
Drought tolerance: moderate
Soil salt tolerances: poor
Plant spacing: 24 to 36 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Hardy to about 25-degrees F., Leatherleaf Fern grows well in shifting to deep shade. Plant on 18 to 24-inch centers. Preferring leafy mold, though tolerant of a wide range of soil conditions, Leatherleaf Fern requires only a moderate amount of water but plants should be irrigated during periods of drought. Leatherleaf Fern can be fertilized during the growing season to maintain its dark green appearance.

Propagation is by division of the rhizomes or by sowing the spores on sterilized, moist peat.

Mealy-bugs, leafhoppers, leaf miners, scale, mites, and fern borers can cause problems for Leatherleaf Fern.

Pests and Diseases

Leatherleaf Fern is susceptible to fungus diseases.