

# Osmundastrum cinnamomeum

## Cinnamon Fern

Tried and True  
Native Plant Selections  
for the Mid-Atlantic



Whether by themselves 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. This versatile, easy to grow fern, formerly classified as *Osmunda cinnamomea*, 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		
<b>Characteristics</b>		
Deciduous perennial in vase-shaped clump with massive rootstocks of densely matted, wiry roots		
Woolly hairs cover emerging fiddleheads		
Erect, fertile fronds appear first, maturing from green to red-brown; they release spores early summer, then promptly wither to the ground		
Yellow-green sterile fronds arch outward and have distinguishing cinnamon hair tuft at base	<th style="background-color: #e91e63; color: white;">Attributes</th>	Attributes
Vibrant fall foliage from golden to burnt orange		
<b>Attributes</b>		
Tolerates dense shade and rabbits; no serious pests or diseases; deer rarely damage		
Osmunda root fiber used for potting orchids		
Ethnobotanic uses; eating fiddleheads may be unsafe	<th style="background-color: #e91e63; color: white;">Growing and Maintenance Tips</th>	Growing and Maintenance Tips
Provides food for a few insects, nesting material (wooly fiddlehead covering) for birds and protective cover when large colonies form		
<b>Growing and Maintenance Tips</b>	<b>Excellent Replacement for</b>	
Soil Requirements: Humus-rich, acidic	<i>Hedera helix</i> - English Ivy	
Light Requirements: Partial Shade, Shade	<i>Liriope spicata</i> - Creeping Lily-turf	
Water Requirements: Moist, Wet	<i>Vinca minor</i> - Periwinkle	
An excellent fern for the beginning gardener		
Use as a dramatic accent plant, in rain or woodland gardens, or along fresh water's edge		
Hardiness: USDA Zones 3–9		
developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria		

Images by Elaine Mills, U.S. National Arboretum



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