

Sitobolium punctilobulum

Hay-scented Fern

Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic

Fomerly *Dennstaedtia punctilobula*, this native* of open woods and dry slopes can spread quickly in shady woodland gardens. Crush some leaflets and its common name becomes apparent from the emanating hay-like scent. It is found throughout most of the Mid-Atlantic.



| Fern | Fiddleheads, Frond with Syrphid Fly,** Colony |
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| Height: 1–3 feet |   |
| Spread: 2–3 feet | |
| Bloom Color: Non-flowering |  |
| Characteristics | |
| Deciduous , arching or erect, spreading perennial | |
| Monomorphic fronds up to 1-foot wide with lacy, triangular, mostly bipinnate-pinnatifid , softly pubescent , yellow-green foliage and stipes straw-colored to darker brown at base with white hairs | |
| Spore-producing sporangia in cup-like structures on marginal underside of fronds July to October | |
| Fronds turn gold or copper-colored in fall | |
| Spreads (aggressively in favorable conditions) by rhizomes to form clonal colonies | |
| Attributes | |
| Tolerates sun (with enough moisture), dense shade, clay to sandy soils, drought, salt spray, rabbits; no serious pests or diseases; deer rarely damage | |
| Low maintenance and adaptable | |
| Aromatic when leaves are brushed/crushed | |
| Provides cover for wildlife; larval host for ~3 lepidopterans | |
| Growing and Maintenance Tips | Excellent Replacement for |
| Soil Requirements : Average, neutral to acidic | Hedera helix - English Ivy |
| Light Requirements : Partial Shade, Shade | Liriope spicata - Creeping Lily-Turf |
| Water Requirements : Dry, Moist | Vinca minor - Periwinkle |
| May decline by late summer in hot climates | <p>*It is native to DC, common in DE, and present throughout MD and in parts of PA. In VA, it is common in the mountains (especially in northern red oak forests), frequent in the Piedmont, and infrequent but widespread in the Coastal Plain.</p> <p>** Eastern calligrapher perching on a pinnule.</p> |
| Use in large woodland gardens where it will have room to spread and not overtake other plants | |
| Hardiness : USDA Zones 3a–8b | |
| developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria | |

Images by Mary Free, Quarry Shade Garden