



Robust Male Fern *Dryopteris x complexa*

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ● ●

Hardiness Zone: 4

Other Names: Common Male Fern, *D. complexa*

Description:

Graceful, arching fronds with wavy margins, a vigorous grower; attractive shaggy fiddleheads unfurl in spring; keep evenly moist, provides habitat and shelter for birds and bees

Ornamental Features

Robust Male Fern is primarily valued in the garden for its cascading habit of growth. Its attractive ferny bipinnately compound leaves remain light green in color throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Robust Male Fern is an herbaceous perennial with a shapely form and gracefully arching foliage. It brings an extremely fine and delicate texture to the garden composition and should be used to full effect.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Robust Male Fern is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens



Robust Male Fern foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Robust Male Fern in spring
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Planting & Growing

Robust Male Fern will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 15 years. As an herbaceous perennial, this plant will usually die back to the crown each winter, and will regrow from the base each spring. Be careful not to disturb the crown in late winter when it may not be readily seen!

This plant does best in partial shade to shade. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone over the growing season to conserve soil moisture. This species is native to parts of North America, and parts of it are known to be toxic to humans and animals, so care should be exercised in planting it around children and pets. It can be propagated by division.

