



Growing Tropical Ferns

CULTURAL TIPS FOR TROPICAL FERN PRODUCTION

Recommendations from Jose Aguirre ... Head Grower @ Casa Flora

FERTILIZER: 20-10-20 or 20-20-20 applied on constant feed at 100 -175 ppm.

LIGHT: 1500-3000 foot-candles. Lower light levels = Longer fronds.

SOIL: A peat-lite mix from a reputable supplier. Must drain well yet still provide good water holding capabilities. **Avoid** vermiculite and/or sand, which tend to plug the air spaces needed for healthy root growth.

WATER: Ferns do NOT tolerate standing water. Lift the pots, you will soon learn when these plants need water. Apply water when the containers become about ½ the weight of a freshly watered container. Water early in the day to allow the foliage to dry. When growing large pots or hanging baskets, if practical, a spaghetti tube system works very well.

CONTAINERS: Any size container must drain well for good plant growth. The use of saucer-less baskets tends to produce a perched water table, unless you are extremely careful with the water.

TEMPERATURE: Best growth occurs between 70°-85°F. Temperatures outside this range tend to retard growth. If, however, you wish to retard growth in early spring, you can allow the temperature to drop lower. Remember to be more careful not to over-water, and watch for botrytis, if you lower the temperature. Soil temperature must not drop below 65° if you wish to keep the ferns actively growing.

pH: 5.5 to 6.7 are acceptable for most fern varieties.

DISEASE AND PESTS: The most prevalent fungal disease in ferns is botrytis, which appears during periods of high humidity and cool temperatures. The major pests, which affect ferns, are scale and aphids. All of these problems can be controlled through good housekeeping, scouting and the proper use of approved pesticides.

Boston Fern, True Boston

Nephrolepis exaltata

'Bostoniensis' (Maasii)

Approx. finish times:

4" — 12-14 weeks

10" Basket — 20-26 weeks