



Hay Scented Fern Fact Sheet

Location and Soil Considerations

Before installing hay scented fern sod, make sure the location you have selected provides the required conditions. Hay scented fern thrives in light to heavy shade. Since hay scented fern spreads easily under favorable conditions, it is best to choose a location where it is free to fill in the space. Loamy, well-draining, acidic soil is preferred. Hay scented fern thrives best in soil with consistent moisture, but will not tolerate standing water.

To test soil drainage, dig a hole 12 inches deep and 12 inches wide and fill the hole with water. The next day, fill the hole with water again. Monitor the drainage of the water; it should be completely drained within 8 hours. If the water hasn't completely drained from the hole within 8 hours, the soil is not well-draining. While soil drainage can be improved over time with the addition of compost and organic material, this can take multiple treatments over several years to accomplish.

Sunlight Requirements

Hay scented fern prefers full to part shade, but will tolerate some sun if moisture is maintained in the soil. If there is any exposure to sunlight, morning sun is preferable to hot afternoon sun.

Hay Scented Fern Post-Installation

In the weeks immediately after installation, make sure the roots stay covered, especially after heavy rains that may displace any compost or peat moss that was applied at installation. If any roots become exposed, cover them with loam, compost, or peat moss.

Any foliage is cut completely to the ground before the fern sod is harvested so that once it's installed the plants can put their energy into developing a strong root system. You may see some growth of stems and foliage once the ferns have rooted in if installed early enough in the season, but you may not see them reach full size until the following year.

Watering

You may use sprinkler systems, drip-line irrigation, or hand watering with a garden hose to water your hay scented fern sod. Be sure to consider any rainfall received when determining whether to water, as excessive watering can cause disease. For newly installed fern sod, water at least 4 times per week for 30 minutes to 1 hour until the plants are established (about 3 weeks). If you notice any change in the color of the fronds, check to see if the soil is damp. If no moisture is present under the top dressing of the sod (approximately 2 inches down), continue the watering routine as described. If the ground is too saturated, refrain from watering for up to 3 days.

Several weeks after installation when the sod is well rooted and established, you can reduce the frequency of watering and water more deeply to encourage deep root growth and drought tolerance. Aim for about one inch of water per week, spread out over the course of the week, including any natural rainfall. This is the watering schedule you'll need to maintain through the growing season in subsequent years.

Encouraging Growth and Plant Health

We recommend fertilizing in early spring with a slow-release fertilizer. If necessary, treat for slugs and snails in late spring by applying bait or diatomaceous earth around the base of the fronds. When the foliage dies back after a heavy frost in fall, cut it down to soil level and protect with mulch through winter. Mulching will help prevent ferns from heaving out of the soil during winter.