

# *Matteuccia struthiopteris*



**Common Name:** ostrich fern

**Missouri Native**

Type: Fern

Family: Onocleaceae

Zone: 3 to 7

Height: 3.00 to 6.00 feet

Spread: 5.00 to 8.00 feet

Bloom Time: Non-flowering

Sun: Part shade to full shade

Water: Medium to wet

Maintenance: Medium

Suggested Use: Naturalize, Rain Garden

Tolerate: Deer, Rabbit, Heavy Shade, Erosion, Clay Soil, Wet Soil

**Culture** Easily grown in average, medium to wet soils in part shade to full shade. Best in rich soils with constant moisture. Soil must never be allowed to dry out. Spreads by underground rhizomes to form dense colonies in optimum growing conditions. Prefers cool summer climates and is generally intolerant of the hot and humid summers of the deep South. Avoid windy sites.

**Noteworthy Characteristics** *Matteuccia struthiopteris*, commonly called ostrich fern, is a clump-forming, upright to arching, rhizomatous, deciduous fern which typically grows 2-3' tall in cultivation, but may reach 6' tall in moist, cool climates in the wild. The showy parts of this fern are the finely dissected, medium green, vegetative (sterile) fronds which, as the common name suggests, exhibit the feathery appearance of long ostrich plumes. The vegetative fronds emerge at the narrow base of the clumps in spring as the familiar "fiddleheads" from where they unfurl to a maximum length of 4'. These vegetative fronds usually depreciate as the summer proceeds, begin to look rather tattered by early fall and finally lose their leaflets later in the fall as the plant goes dormant for the winter. The sterile fronds form a huge vase-like crown around the much less showy fertile fronds which are erect, spike-like and dark brown. The fertile fronds arise in mid-summer and persist through the winter.

Source: <https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder>