



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## *Asplenium nidus*<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

Eventually reaching about four feet tall and wide, Bird's Nest Fern is a striking plant to use as a specimen planting, at entranceways, or in containers where it will always attract attention (Fig. 1). The large, stemless, apple green leaves have a black, prominent midrib and unfurl from a tight center, giving a bird nest effect. The spores are borne in prominent brown sporophores on the underside of leaves.

### General Information

**Scientific name:** *Asplenium nidus*

**Pronunciation:** ass-PLLEE-nee-um NYE-dus

**Common name(s):** Bird's Nest Fern

**Family:** *Polypodiaceae*

**Plant type:** herbaceous; perennial

**USDA hardiness zones:** 9 through 11 (Fig. 2)

**Planting month for zone 9:** year round

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** mass planting; foundation; border; ground cover; edging; suitable for growing indoors

**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

### Description

**Height:** 2 to 4 feet

**Spread:** 2 to 4 feet

**Plant habit:** upright; round

**Plant density:** open

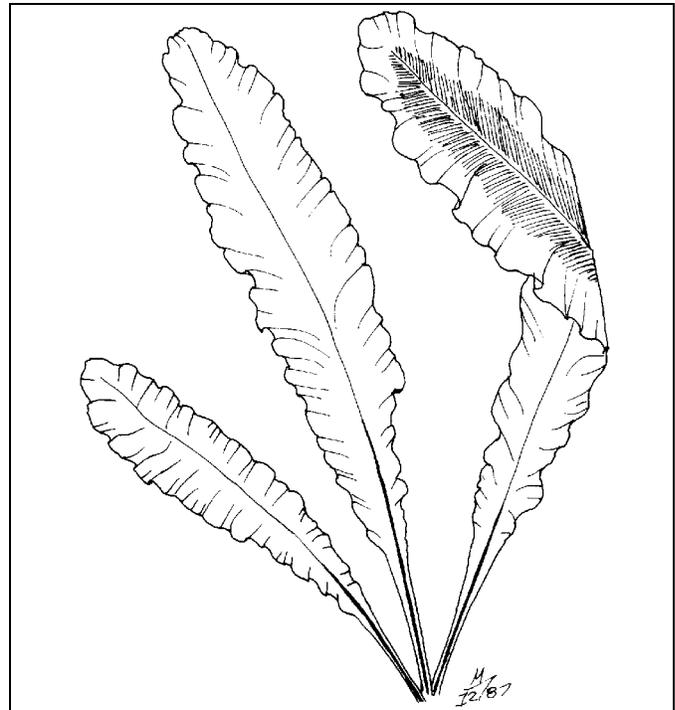


Figure 1. Bird's Nest Fern.

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** coarse

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** most emerge from the soil, usually without a stem

**Leaf type:** simple

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-54, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October 1999. Please visit the EDIS web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Leaf margin:** lobed; undulate  
**Leaf shape:** linear  
**Leaf venation:** pinnate  
**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen  
**Leaf blade length:** more than 36 inches  
**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** no fall color change  
**Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

**Flower color:** no flowers  
**Flower characteristic:** no flowers

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** no fruit  
**Fruit length:** no fruit  
**Fruit cover:** no fruit  
**Fruit color:** no fruit  
**Fruit characteristic:** no fruit

**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not applicable

**Current year stem/twig color:** not applicable  
**Current year stem/twig thickness:** not applicable

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** plant grows in the shade  
**Soil tolerances:** occasionally wet; clay; sand; acidic; loam  
**Drought tolerance:**  
**Soil salt tolerances:** poor  
**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

**Other**

**Roots:** not applicable  
**Winter interest:** no special winter interest  
**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding  
**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive  
**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

## Use and Management

Growing in rich, moist soil, Bird's Nest Fern prefers shady locations. Leaves turn yellow and the plant stops growing in the sun. Like many ferns, drought tolerance is minimal. It can also be copper-wired to tree trunks to grow on a fibrous slab. Plant on two to three-foot centers to create a mass planting.

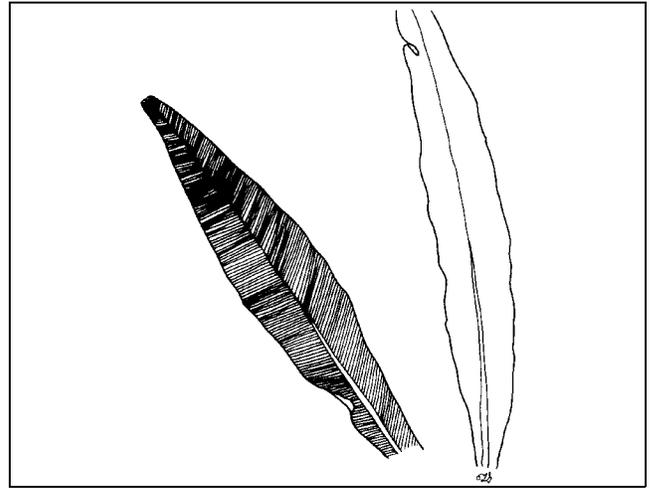
There is a dwarf cultivar which grows to about two feet tall and wide. It's reportedly cold hardy into the lower part of USDA hardiness zone 8b.

Propagation is by spores or from tissue culture.

Problems include foliar nematodes, scale, slugs, and snails.

### Pests and Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.



**Figure 3.** Foliage of Bird's Nest Fern