**Acrostichum daneifolium**

Edward F. Gilman

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### Introduction

This beautiful fern native to Florida grows larger than many other ferns, becoming 4 to 8 feet tall (Fig. 1). The 3 to 6 feet long, pinnately divided fronds emerge from the ground to form a beautifully textured, open form. The plant changes very little throughout the year, but instead provides a continual green mass of beautiful foliage.

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### General Information

**Scientific name:** *Acrostichum daneifolium*

**Pronunciation:** ack-ro-STISH-um dan-ee-if-FOLE-ee-um

**Common name(s):** Leather Fern

**Family:** Adiantaceae

**Plant type:** perennial; herbaceous

**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:** native to Florida

**Uses:** mass planting; accent; border

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

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### Description

**Height:** 4 to 8 feet

**Spread:** 3 to 5 feet

**Plant habit:** upright

**Plant density:** open

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** coarse

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### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate

**Leaf type:** odd-pinnately compound

**Leaf margin:** undulate

**Leaf shape:** linear; oblong

**Leaf venation:** none, or difficult to see

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: 8 to 12 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: unknown
Fruit length: unknown
Fruit cover: unknown
Fruit color: brown
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not particularly showy; usually with one stem/trunk
Current year stem/twig color: not applicable
Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in the shade
Soil tolerances: extended flooding; acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay
Drought tolerance:
Soil salt tolerances: good
Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests
Use and Management

Leather Fern looks spectacular planted in mass in a large landscape. Its unusual texture and open habit combine to make this a great, eye-catching attraction. In a smaller residential landscape, Leather Fern can be used as a specimen planted alone to add texture to the garden. Many ferns grow poorly near the coast, however this one is tolerant of all but the most exposed ocean front lots.

Provide a shaded or partially shaded spot for Leather Fern for the best growth and to keep plants healthy. Prolonged direct sun, especially in the summer, can burn foliage. Many ferns grow best with regular applications of fertilizer to maintain growth and green foliage. Ferns transplant fine any time of year as long the soil ball is handled carefully.