**Asplenium nidus**

Edward F. Gilman

**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-PLEE-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

**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.

2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap, or national origin. For information on obtaining other extension publications, contact your county Cooperative Extension Service office. Florida Cooperative Extension Service / Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences / University of Florida / Christine Taylor Waddill, Dean.
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

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.