

# Information and Care Instructions

## Mother Fern

### Quick Reference

- Botanical Name - *Asplenium bulbiferum*
- Exposure - Shade to bright, indirect
- Indoor Placement - Bright location but not in direct afternoon sun
- USDA Hardiness - Zone 10a to 11
- Inside Temperature - 50-70°F
- Min Outside Temperature - 30°F
- Plant Type - Evergreen Fern
- Watering - Allow soil to dry out slightly before watering. Do not allow the pot to sit in standing water for more than a few minutes
- Water Amount Used -  
4" Pot = 1/3 cup of water  
6 1/2" Pot = 1 1/4 cups of water
- Fertilizing - Fertilize monthly

### Detailed Care

Your Mother Fern was grown in a plastic pot. Depending on the item, it may then have been transplanted into a decorative pot before sale or simply "dropped" into a container while still in the plastic pot.

#### WATERING

1. Let the top of the soil dry out slightly before watering; check frequently, especially if kept in a hot, dry spot. Mother Ferns like to be kept evenly moist, but not soggy.

2. When watering, use the recommended amount of water for your pot size (See Quick Reference Guide) poured directly on the soil. In order not to damage your furniture, countertop or floor, place your Mother



Fern in a saucer, bowl or sink when watering. Allow the water to drain for 5 minutes. Do not allow the soil to sit in water for any more than 5 minutes or damage to the roots may occur. Avoid continuous use of softened water as the sodium in it can build up to damaging levels in the soil.

3. Sprinkling or misting the fronds with water several times per week is also beneficial to keeping your fern looking good and preventing insect pests.

4. Fertilize lightly with a complete, quality fertilizer once a month if your plant is actively growing. Avoid over-fertilizing...a little is good but a lot is not!

#### PLACEMENT OF YOUR MOTHER FERN

If you wish to keep your plant indoors, choose a spot with lots of natural light like near a north or east facing window. South and especially west facing windows tend to have too much direct afternoon sun so avoid placing your plant directly next to one. Artificial lights (e.g. lamps) do not provide enough light to keep Mother Ferns alive unless the plant is placed within 2 feet of the bulb and it is illuminated for at least 10 hours per day every day. A location that is near a window or door that is frequently open is beneficial to keeping your plant healthy also. For best results, after 2 or 3 weeks of being inside your plant would like a 1 to 2 week "vacation" outside on a covered porch or patio (please read the outdoor placement section in the next paragraph), especially during the non-winter months. This will help it to resume active growing and rebuild reserves used up while indoors.

If you wish to keep your plant outdoors, choose a mostly shady spot that does not receive direct afternoon sun. A sheltered porch or patio or under trees with dappled sunlight are perfect places for Mother Ferns to thrive. If kept in a pot, your plant must be protected from freezing temperatures. If you live in USDA Zones 10a to 11 you can safely plant your Mother Fern in the ground without damage.

### Mother Fern Detail Care Instructions



#### PEST PROTECTION

Mother Ferns are susceptible to certain insects such as aphids. The best way to treat them is to prevent them and the best way to prevent them is to frequently and regularly sprinkle the leaves and vines with clean water. During the summer when the insects are most active it is a good idea to sprinkle your plant once a day and once a week give it a good rinsing under the faucet or hose. Care should be taken, however, avoid getting water into the soil as this will cause overwatering. Only water the soil when the plant needs to be watered!

Despite your best efforts if one of these insects does manage to become established, you may spray your plant with store-bought insecticide that is labeled to control your insect.

Mother Ferns may also suffer from the fungal diseases botrytis and root rot. Botrytis typically attacks damaged fronds or parts of fronds and will be worse in wet conditions. When sprinkling/misting your plant always do it in the morning or during the heat of the day while there is still time for the water to evaporate from the leaves. The root rot is caused by over watering or over-fertilizing or a combination of the two. Both of these cause the plant to become weakened and thus susceptible to attack by the fungus.

#### KEEPING YOUR MOTHER FERN LOOKING GOOD

Over time some fronds on your plant are likely to turn brown or yellow or just die. Simply cut out these fronds near the base of the plant, being careful not to damage the other fronds or any new ones that are just emerging. If part of a frond gets damaged or is otherwise not looking good, you may trim off just the bad part and the remainder of the frond will be fine. Mother Ferns that are in a spot with too much sunlight, but not enough to actually burn them, will turn yellowish or bleached. Do not apply more fertilizer to make them turn green; just move your plant to a more shaded location and over time the new green fronds will overtake the yellow ones.

#### REPOTTING

Your Mother Fern can remain in its original pot or you may re-pot it to a larger or more decorative pot if you like. Natural terra cotta pots are a good choice as they promote healthy roots, although you must check the moisture level of the soil more frequently since they dry out faster. No matter which pot you choose to use, it **MUST** have at least one good sized hole on the bottom to allow the excess irrigation water to drain out! Use the highest quality soil mix you can find that has good drainage properties (a coarse mix with large particle sizes rather than a fine/compact mix). When transplanting do not compress the soil, keep it loose and fluffy for best rooting results and do not disturb the original root ball too much if possible. After transplanting, check the moisture level very carefully as it is very easy to over- or under-water a newly transplanted plant. You must check the moisture level of the original root ball and water only when it is slightly dry to the touch. Only transplant a healthy, growing plant...weak plants tends to die upon transplanting!

#### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**How do I water my plant?** Use clean water poured directly and carefully onto the soil in the pot. Be sure to remove your plant from any furniture etc. when watering if you do not have it placed in a saucer as the water that drains may damage your furniture.

**How often do I need to fertilize my plant?** If your plant is growing, lightly fertilize it once a month. Often in the winter you may not need to give it any fertilizer until it starts to grow again in the spring.

**Can I place my plant in full sunlight?** No. Never. Mother Ferns grow under trees and in other shady spots in the forest or hillsides, not in direct sunlight. Early morning sun should be okay.

**Where should I put my plant?** Your plant can be placed indoors or outdoors. In either case it needs lots of indirect sunlight. Outdoors it should be in a protected location such as a shaded porch or patio. Indoors it needs to be in a spot with lots of natural light.

**What can I do with my Mother Fern?** The graceful arching fronds of the Mother Fern make it perfect to add to terrariums, decorative combination planters or as an accent on a mantelpiece. They are also good in association with cut flower displays and look great in a protected nook of a shade garden.