



***Osmunda claytoniana* – Interrupted Fern**

COMMON NAME: Interrupted Fern, Clayton’s Fern, Clayton’s Flowering Fern

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Osmunda claytoniana* The name comes from *Osmunder*, a Saxon god who hid his family from danger in a clump of these ferns. John Clayton (1685-1773) was an eminent botanist, physician and author of *Flora Virginica*.

REPRODUCTION: The fertile fronds are in the middle of the blade. They wither early and fall off leaving a gap, hence the name of “interrupted fern.” Crowns can be divided in the spring.

SIZE: Between 2 and 5 feet tall. One of the tallest ferns.

BEHAVIOR: Rootstalk is stout and creeping. Fiddleheads are stout, brown and very wooly; among the earliest to emerge in spring.

SITE REQUIREMENTS: Easily grown, hardy, adaptable. Will tolerate dry, shady locations, but prefers damp areas in meadows, along streams and moist woodlands. It grows best in acid soil in shady, moist areas.

SPECIAL FEATURES: Distinguished from other ferns by its large size and the spore bearing leaflets growing in the middle of the sterile fronds. Fronds turn yellow-gold in the autumn.

NATURAL RANGE: Newfoundland to North Carolina in the east and ranging west to the Mississippi River.

SUGGESTED CARE: Easy to cultivate in a moist garden; needs little care. Allow 3 feet between plants.

COMPANION PLANTS: Lady fern, cinnamon fern, jewelweed, spring beauty, toothwort, trout lily, baneberry, Jack-in-the-pulpit, wild ginger, sugar maple and red oak.