



## ***Osmunda regalis* – Royal Fern**

COMMON NAME: Royal Fern

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Osmunda regalis* The origin of the fern family *Osmunda* is uncertain, but may refer to the Saxon god Osmund. Of interest is that fossils of this fern family have been found in rocks of the Permian age (230,000,000 years ago) when the continents were consolidated into the supercontinent of Pangea.

REPRODUCTION: The fertile pinnae are at the top of fronds. They develop in late May to early June.

SIZE: Medium to tall fern, 2 to 5 feet.

BEHAVIOR: Non-invasive with older plants becoming large and bushy.

SITE REQUIREMENTS: Grows on rich to moist soils, often quite acidic. Found in swamps, marshes, stream banks, wet meadows. Tolerates light shade, but develops best if it has lots of sun.

SPECIAL FEATURES: Fiddleheads are smooth, wine-colored and prominent in early spring. Foliage provides an attractive textural contrast. It is a translucent pale green in bright sunlight and bright green with reddish stems in less sunlight.

NATURAL RANGE: Throughout Wisconsin. Newfoundland to Saskatchewan, south to Florida and east Texas.

SUGGESTED CARE: Water well during the first season. Use in full sun. Cut back in the fall and add a layer of mulch or straw as a protection against squirrels digging the plants up for food.

COMPANION PLANTS: In boggy sites with grass pink orchid, cinnamon fern, quaking aspen, winterberry, black chokeberry, steeple bush and star flower. At springs with bluejoint grass, marsh shield fern, boneset, wild iris, cowbane, mountain mint, grass-leaved goldenrod and skunk cabbage.