



Photo by Gary Fleming

Marsh Fern (*Thelypteris palustris*) Deciduous fern with fronds emerging from spreading rhizomes. Sori on the underside of the leaf near the stem. Larval host plant for 6 species of moth. Only known host for the Marsh Fern Moth (*Fagitana littera*).



Photo by Seig Kopinitz/VNPS

Marsh Fern (*Thelypteris palustris*) Deciduous colony-forming fern with fronds emerging from spreading rhizomes. Sori on the underside of fertile fronds in chain-like rows. Larval host plant for 4 species of moth.

About our Logo: The Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) is a host plant for the Silvery Checkerspot (*Chlosyne nycteis*) butterfly. The caterpillars eat the leaves of the Black-eyed Susan. The Carolina Chickadee (*Parus carolinensis*) feeds the caterpillars to its young. Adult birds will eat the butterflies, the caterpillars and the seeds of the Black-eyed Susan.

On the cover: Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum pendatum*). Photo by Kathy Fell

What makes a plant native?

Native plants are species that evolved in a specific region without any known human involvement. Ferns evolved nearly 400 million years ago.

Why are native plants important?

Native plants co-evolved with native species of insects and animals. They are an important part of our regional ecosystem.

What is a larval host plant?

Caterpillars are very picky eaters. Each species of caterpillar will only eat a few species of plants. Ferns are host plants for several species of moths.

Where do ferns grow?

Ferns are mostly found in rich leaf mulch under deciduous trees. Ferns spread by rhizomes and by spores. Spores can be found on the underside of leaves or on special frond leaves.

Ferns of the Southern Piedmont



Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum pendatum*)
Photo by Kathy Fell

Ferns of the Southern Piedmont



Photo by Kathy Fell

Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum pedatum*) deciduous fern with delicate fronds in a circular pattern. Larval host plant for the Florida Fern Moth (*Callopietria floridensis*).



Photo by Kathy Fell

Ebony Spleenwort (*Asplenium platyneuron*) Evergreen fern with slender, erect fronds that are tapered at both ends. Larval host plant for one species of moth (*Spodoptera exigua*).



Photo by Kathy Fell

Southern Lady Fern (*Athyrium asplenioides*) Deciduous fern with broad, lacy fronds and reddish stems growing in a circular clump. Larval host plant for 3 species of moth.



Photo by R. W. Smity/Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Rattlesnake Fern (*Botrypus virginianus*) Deciduous fern with a single, triangle-shaped frond. Fertile fronds are taller and produce round sporangia resembling tiny grapes.



Photo by Jan Newton/VNPS

Hay-scented Fern (*Dennstaedtia punctilobula*) Deciduous fern with lacy, yellowish, triangle-shaped fronds that grow in clumps. Smells like mowed hay when crushed. Larval host plant for 3 species of moth



Photo by Kathy Fell

Sensitive Fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*) Deciduous fern with leathery, triangle-shaped fronds. Fertile fronds emerge in late summer with bead-line sporangia. Larval host plant for 6 species of moth.



Photo by Gary Fleming

Royal Fern (*Osmunda spectabilis*) Deciduous fern with broad fronds that grow in clumps. Fertile fronds are covered in golden bead-like sporangia. Larval host plant for 7 species of moth.



Photo by Kathy Fell

Cinnamon Fern (*Osmundastrum cinnamomeum*) Deciduous fern with stiff, erect fronds in a vase-shaped clump. Fertile fronds rise from the center of the clump with cinnamon-colored sporangia. Larval host plant for 7 species of moth.



Photo by Gary Fleming

New York Fern (*Parathelypteris noveboracensis*) Deciduous clump-forming fern with fronds that taper at the top and bottom. Sori located on the underside of the leaves. Larval host plant for 6 species of moth.



Photo by Gary Fleming

Broad Beech Fern (*Phegopteris hexagonoptera*) Deciduous fern with broad triangular fronds occurring singly along creeping rhizome. Sori located on the underside of the leaves. Fronds turn pale yellow in fall.



Photo by Kathy Fell

Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*) Clump-forming evergreen fern with leaflets resembling tiny stockings. Larval host plant for 5 species of moth.



Photo by Gary Fleming

Southern Bracken Fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*) Deciduous fern with deep roots. Fronds emerge from the creeping root stock. Sori on the underside of leaf margins. Larval host plant for 11 species of moth and 1 species of butterfly.