

## Quick Guide to the Common Ferns of New England

by Arieh Tal

Other occasionally-common or locally-common ferns not covered in this guide include: Oak fern (*Gymnocarpium dryopteris*), Fragile fern (*Cystopteris fragilis*), Bulblet fern (*Cystopteris bulbifera*), Mountain Woodfern (*Dryopteris campyloptera*), Maidenhair spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes*), Massachusetts fern (*Thelypteris simulata*).

Numbers in parentheses refer to page numbers in Boughton Cobb, A Field Guide to Ferns and their related families, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1984. Where more than one scientific name for a species is given, the current name is listed first, followed by the previous name.

Height Characteristics (typical for species.): Tall = Greater than 2 feet. Medium = 10 inches to 2 feet. Short = Less than 10 inches.

Growth Forms: Symmetrical clump, Asymmetrical clump, or Random (Rhizomatous).

Fern Name				Frond (Leaf) Attributes				Spore Attributes	
	Ever-green	Height	Growth Form	No. Cuts	Shape	Stem Surface	Stem Groove	Location of Spore Cases	Shape/Color of Spore Clusters
<b>Royal</b> (168) ( <i>Osmunda regalis</i> )	N	Tall	Sym. Clump	2	Very large; Longer than Broad	Green; Smooth, with whitish "bloom"	No groove	At end (terminal) of fronds	Globular in clusters
<b>Cinnamon</b> (172) ( <i>Osmunda cinnamomea</i> )	N	Tall	Sym. Clump	2	<b>Plume;</b> Lanceolate; slight taper at base	Green; Pale brown fuzz, diminishing later in season to smooth stem	No groove	Separate fertile frond	Globular in clusters; green turning tan
<b>Interrupted</b> (170) ( <i>Osmunda claytoniana</i> )	N	Tall	Sym. Clump	2	<b>Plume;</b> Lanceolate; slight taper at base	Green; Smooth, except when frond unfurls early in season	No groove	In middle of fronds, forming an "interruption"	Globular in clusters; green turning brown
<b>Hayscented</b> (116) ( <i>Dennstaedtia punctilobula</i> )	N	Med.	Random; Rhizom.	3	<b>Plume;</b> Lanceolate; slight taper at base or no taper	Green; Finely downy	Shallow groove or none	Underside of Frond	Nest shaped
<b>Bracken</b> (134) ( <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> )	N	Med-Tall	Random; Rhizom.	2-3	<b>Triangular;</b> three segments	Dark Green; Finely downy	Shallow groove	Underside of Frond on leaf margins	In narrow lines under folds of leaflets
<b>Polypody</b> (130) ( <i>Polypodium virginianum</i> )	Y	Short	Random; Rhizom.	1	<b>Plume;</b> Lanceolate; slight taper at base	Dark green; New frond: scattered, thin scales Late frond: smooth	No groove	Underside of Frond	Red-brown; Round with no indusium (cover)

<b>Long Beech</b> (82) <i>(Phegopteris connectilis)</i> <i>(Thelypteris phegopteris)</i>	N	Short	Random; Rhizom.	2	<b>Triangular</b> ; lowest 2 pinnae bent inward	Green; Light tan scales throughout	No groove	Underside of Fron	Spores in round clusters; No indusium (cover)
<b>New York</b> (86) <i>(Thelypteris noveboracensis)</i>	N	Short	Random; Rhizom.	2	<b>Plume</b> ; Lanceolate; sharply tapered at base	Green; Sparse, very fine, scales and/or hairs	Shallow groove or none	Underside of Fron	Kidney- shaped; pale
<b>Marsh</b> (84) <i>(Thelypteris palustris)</i>	N	Short	Random; Rhizom.	2	<b>Plume</b> ; Lanceolate; slight tapered at base or none; often twisted at apex	Green above, black at base; Smooth; Longer than blade	No groove	Separate fertile frond; often taller than sterile fronds; Spores on upper leaflets in rows on main vein	Narrow, kidney- shaped; Pale; Slightly hairy or ciliate
<b>Ostrich</b> (118) <i>(Matteuccia struthiopteris)</i>	N	Tall	Sym. Clump	2	<b>Plume</b> ; Lanceolate; strongly tapered tip & base	Green; Smooth throughout	Deep, pronounced groove at base	Separate fertile frond	Spores completely covered by leaf margins
<b>Sensitive</b> (120) <i>(Onoclea sensibilis)</i>	N	Short- Med.	Random; Rhizom.	1-2	<b>Triangular</b> ; lowest 2 pinnae bent inwards	Green, shade varies; Smooth	No groove	Separate fertile frond	Enveloped completely by fertile leaflet
<b>Christmas</b> (126) <i>(Polystichum acrostichoides)</i>	Y	Med.	Asym. Clump	2	<b>Plume</b> ; Lanceolate; slight taper at base	Dark green; Dense, broad, light tan scales	Shallow groove; base may be ungrooved	Underside of Fron, close to leaf axis	Red-brown; Round, in rows
<b>Lady</b> (110) <i>(Athyrium filix-femina)</i>	N	Med.	Asym. Clump	2-3	<b>Plume</b> ; Lanceolate; tapered at base	Green & red varieties; Narrow, dark scales at base	Grooved	Underside of Fron; at oblique angle to main vein	Narrow; curved
<b>Marginal Wood</b> (64) <i>(Dryopteris marginalis)</i>	Y	Med.	Sym. Clump	2	<b>Plume</b> ; Lanceolate; slight taper at base or no taper	Green; Dense, light brown scales at base	Grooved	Underside of Fron near leaflet margins	Kidney- shaped; Gray, turning brown
<b>Intermediate Wood</b> (68) <i>(Dryopteris intermedia)</i>	Y	Med.	Sym. Clump	3	<b>Plume</b> ; Lanceolate; slight taper at base or no taper	Green; Dense, light brown scales at base; Glandular hairs near tip	Grooved	Underside of Fron between margins & main vein	Kidney- shaped; Indusium (cover) glandular
<b>Spinulose Wood</b> (68) <i>(Dryopteris carthusiana)</i> <i>(Dryopteris spinulosa)</i>	N	Med.	Sym. Clump	3	<b>Plume</b> ; Lanceolate; slight taper at base or no taper	Green; Dense, light brown scales at base	Grooved	Underside of Fron, near tips of veins	Kidney- shaped; Indusium (cover) smooth
<b>Maidenhair</b> (140) <i>(Adiantum pedatum)</i>	N	Med.	Random; Rhizom.	3	<b>Oval</b> ; segments lanceolate	Dark brown to black; thin; Fine scales near base	No groove	Underside of Fron	Linear- shaped spores covered by leaf margins; White or yellow-green