

## ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE

Environmental Horticulture #EH431



### MATTEUCCIA

### PRODUCTION AND CONSUMER CARE

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#### INTRODUCTION

- Common name: Ostrich fern
- Scientific name: *Matteuccia struthiopteris*
- Native to temperate areas of the Northern Hemisphere
- Deciduous fern growing up to 4-6' tall
- Large sterile fronds grow up to 4-6' long; shorter fertile fronds are 1-2' in length
- Fronds form vertical, vase-shaped crowns
- Sterile fronds taper quickly to the tip and resemble ostrich plumes
- Often found in river floodplains in northeastern North America
- Hardy in zones 2-10

#### GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

- Requires consistently moist media that is slightly acidic
- Does not perform well in clay soil
- Prefers light shade or dappled sunlight
- In heavy shade, plants may not produce fertile fronds
- Too much sun will bleach fronds

#### PROPAGATION

- Can be propagated by dividing the rootball
- Space new plants 2-3' apart

#### DISORDERS

- Relatively free of pest and disease problems

### **CONSUMER CARE**

- Often used as an ornamental plant
- Fronds are delicate and easily damaged
- Can be invasive
- Fertile fronds can be used in dried arrangements
- Immature fronds, called fiddleheads, can be eaten as a cooked vegetable

### **CULTIVARS AND SPECIES**

- *Matteuccia struthiopteris*: upright fronds with a clumping habit

### **References**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ostrich\\_fern](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ostrich_fern)

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[http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/grasses/plants/ostrich\\_fern.htm](http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/grasses/plants/ostrich_fern.htm)