FAMILY TREE NURSERY

Australian Tree Fern

Sphaeropteris cooperi



Australian Tree Fern
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 20 feet

Spread: 12 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Lacy Tree Fern, Scaly Tree Fern

Description:

This fast growing variety produces finely divided, lacy fronds that rise out of the trunk and arch down as they mature; fuzzy brown and white scales cover the trunk and leaf stems; prefers bright shade; a stunning accent or container plant



Australian Tree Fern foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Australian Tree Fern's attractive large ferny bipinnately compound leaves emerge chartreuse in spring, turning green in color the rest of the year on a plant with an arching habit of growth.

Landscape Attributes

Australian Tree Fern is an open annual with a strong central leader and a shapely form and gracefully arching foliage. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other garden plants with less refined foliage.

This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and should not require much pruning, except when necessary, such as to remove dieback. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Australian Tree Fern is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

8424 Farley St.
Overland Park, KS 66212
913.642.6503

7036 Nieman
Shawnee, KS 66203
913.631.6121

830 W Liberty Dr.
Liberty, MO 64068
816.781.0001

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Planting & Growing

Australian Tree Fern will grow to be about 20 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 12 feet. It has a high canopy of foliage that sits well above the ground. As it matures, the lower branches of this tree can be strategically removed to create a high enough canopy to support unobstructed human traffic underneath. Although it's not a true annual, this fast-growing plant can be expected to behave as an annual in our climate if left outdoors over the winter, usually needing replacement the following year. As such, gardeners should take into consideration that it will perform differently than it would in its native habitat.

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in both summer and winter to conserve soil moisture and protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is not originally from North America.

Australian Tree Fern is a fine choice for the yard, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its height, it is often used as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.