



photo: Dondald Cameron

OSTRICH FERN

Matteuccia struthiopteris

The large, lustrous, and graceful dark green fronds of this fern resemble ostrich plumes in summer, after emerging as edible fiddleheads in spring. Will form a quick cover with spreading, underground rhizomes.

Benefits for Wildlife

- Birds use plant materials for nest construction
- Provides cover for amphibians, birds, and small mammals
- Deer and moose sometimes browse fiddleheads and leaves

Host to 4 caterpillar species:
(common names) Conservula anodonta;
Olethreutes auricapitana; Gold-spotted Ghost Moth; Reticulated Fruitworm Moth

Benefits for People

- Fiddleheads are edible
- Great for cut-flower arrangements
- The genus name *Matteuccie* honors an Italian physicist

Growing Information

<i>Sunlight</i>	Part to full shade
<i>Soil Type</i>	Prefers moist, rich, well-drained soil
<i>Height</i>	3–5'
<i>Width</i>	3–8'

Natural Habitat

- Moist thickets, shady stream sides

