



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

