

# Cinnamon Fern

## *Osmunda cinnamomea*

*North American Native*

*Osmunda* Origin of meaning is uncertain.

*cinnamomea* (sin-a-mo-mee-a) meaning brown, from the Latin "cinnamon".



### About the Species:

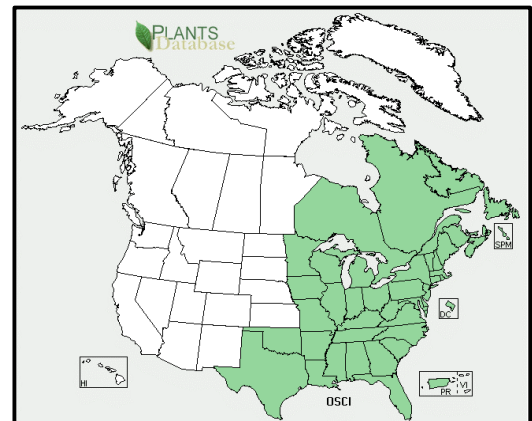
**Family:** Osmundaceae

**Zones:** 2 - 10 **Height:** 3 - 4' **Spacing:** 18"

The Cinnamon Fern is identified by the fuzzy cinnamon fertile fronds that appear in the center of the green sterile fronds in the early spring. Sometimes confused with the Ostrich Fern, this fern is somewhat shorter at 3-5 feet with the sterile brown fronds disappearing in mid summer while the fertile fronds of the Ostrich Fern are just starting to turn brown. Small tufts at the base of each leaflet of the Cinnamon Fern are another identifying feature. This slow growing fern has a coarse texture and is one of the first ferns to emerge in the spring. The fiddleheads are eaten by Ruffed Grouse. These ferns also provide seasonal shelter for birds and other wildlife. Hummingbirds sometime use the fuzz on young fronds to line their nests. Fossil records indicate that members of the Osmundaceae family are among the oldest of ferns.

**Habitat:** This woodland fern will enjoy constant moisture in an acidic soil. It will handle wet, swampy land and some direct sun if kept moist. *Osmunda cinnamomea* natively grows in bogs, peat lands, thickets, wet woods, swamps, ditches, and streambeds.

**In the Garden:** Cinnamon Ferns have a light, feathery look to them, are easy to grow and very showy. Plant them at a streamside, in a damp woodland garden, shade border, containers, or in a collection of ferns. Combine with other ferns, bold textured, or use as a specimen. Cinnamon fern will naturalize well in wet woodlands and is useful as a background for smaller, colorful ferns and perennials.



USDA Plants Database

### Pretty and Useful.

During the early years of Orchid collecting, a rooting medium was needed to keep the Orchids alive and thriving. Sphagnum moss was used initially and then *Osmunda* fiber was introduced. At the time *Osmunda* were readily available and reasonably priced. The *Osmunda* fiber came from the roots and rhizomes of ferns in the Osmundaceae Family. *Osmunda* roots were harvested from old fern colonies where the roots accumulated in extensive mats. The fibers were tough and springy, giving the roots plenty of air and with the process of decaying would furnish all the nutrients the orchids needed. The demand for *Osmunda* fibers increased causing them to become scarce and expensive. Today there are many alternatives to the *Osmunda* fiber and Sphagnum moss, saving the depletion of these natural resources