

Australian Tree Fern

Light: Dappled sunlight or shade. Do not expose to direct sunlight. They can handle stronger sun in more northern latitudes.

Water: Even, regular and copious moisture and high humidity. Never allow to dry out.

Temperature: They reportedly can survive light frosts, down to 25°F. However, they don't appreciate sudden fluctuations in temperature, and hot, dry conditions are fatal.

Soil: Rich, very well-drained organic material.

Fertilizer: Heavy feeders. Use slow-release pellets three times annually.

Propagation:

By spore. Propagation is best left to professionals, unless you're familiar with fern reproduction.

Varieties:

The Australian tree fern is *Cyathea cooperi*, but is sometimes offered as *Alsophila cooperi* or *Sphaeropteris cooperi*. There are several other tree ferns found in cultivation, such as the Mexican tree fern (*Cibotium schiedeii*), but these are unrelated to the *C. cooperi*.

Grower's Tips:

Native to Australian and New Zealand, tree ferns are often found growing on misty mountainsides in great profusion. In the indoor environment, the key to success is to provide very wet and humid, but mild, conditions. They dislike extreme heat and cannot tolerate dry air or compost. Finally, they are very heavy feeders and will thrive with frequent applications of fertilizer. Trim off dead bottom fronds and protect the central growth point, where new fronds rise in graceful, curling arches.