



Berry Show – Pot Plant Education Series

Any Other Fern not Listed – Class 1412

Celebrating the diversity of ferns through single-plant displays that highlight character, health, and form within the Berry Show limits.

Why Enter this Class

This class is open to all ferns except Maidenhairs, giving gardeners the freedom to showcase a range of shapes, frond textures, and growth habits. It's an opportunity to highlight a well-grown individual plant — a single fern that demonstrates balance, health, and natural beauty.

Choosing Your Fern

Select a fern that represents your best cultivation effort. The ideal specimen is symmetrical, lush, evenly coloured, and looks at home in its pot. Avoid over-potted or leggy plants. Choose a specimen with a defined form that fills its space naturally.

Common Name	Species	Features	Display Tips
Boston Fern	<i>Nephrolepis exaltata</i>	Lush, arching, traditional form.	Looks best in wide, shallow pots or hanging baskets.
Bird's Nest Fern	<i>Asplenium australasicum</i>	Glossy rosette of broad leaves.	Keep the crown clean and dry; central symmetry is key.
Kangaroo Fern	<i>Microsorium diversifolium</i>	Textured, trailing habit.	Allow to spill gently over the edge of the pot.
Button Fern	<i>Pellaea rotundifolia</i>	Small, leathery, round leaflets.	Compact, tidy, ideal for tabletop display.
Hare's-foot Fern	<i>Davallia fejeensis</i>	Furry rhizomes and delicate fronds.	Display in a shallow bowl to show rhizomes.
Holly Fern	<i>Cyrtomium falcatum</i>	Glossy, holly-shaped leaflets.	Highlight its deep green sheen with a neutral pot.

Common Name	Species	Features	Display Tips
Japanese Painted Fern	<i>Athyrium niponicum</i>	Silver-green with burgundy tones.	Use a dark pot to emphasise colour variation.
Crested Bird's Nest Fern	<i>Asplenium nidus</i> cv.	Ruffled or wavy fronds.	Choose compact cultivars under 35 cm wide.
Native Shield Fern	<i>Lastreopsis decomposita</i>	Soft, feathery fronds.	Excellent local species; thrives in Berry's humidity.

Potting Mix and Growing Conditions

- 2 parts premium potting mix
- 1 part coco coir or peat moss for moisture retention
- 1 part fine pine bark or orchid bark
- 1 part perlite or coarse sand for drainage

Ferns prefer evenly moist soil and bright, filtered light. Mist regularly during warm weather. Feed fortnightly with half-strength liquid fertiliser.

What Makes a Strong Display

Attribute	What to Aim For	How to Achieve It
Form	Symmetrical, balanced, and full canopy.	Rotate the pot weekly during growth for even frond length.
Foliage Condition	Fresh, green, undamaged fronds.	Maintain humidity and steady moisture.
Presentation	Clean pot, moss top, no pests or marks.	Wipe foliage, refresh mix, and prepare pot one week before benching.

Examples of Attractive Displays

- Boston fern in a low terracotta bowl – even arching fronds, dense crown.
- Bird's Nest fern in a simple ceramic pot – strong, symmetrical rosette form.
- Button fern in a composite container – neat, balanced, and compact.

- Hare's-foot fern with visible rhizomes – natural and interesting texture.
- Japanese Painted fern in a dark pot – highlights silver tones beautifully.

At-a-Glance Care Calendar

Month	Key Tasks	Purpose / Notes
August–September	Assess your fern collection. Choose 1–2 potential plants that have good shape and vitality.	Early selection gives time to strengthen or tidy up before summer growth.
October	Repot if necessary. Refresh the potting mix (2 parts mix, 1 part coir, 1 part bark, 1 part perlite). Don't overpot.	Encourages root health and new frond growth before heat.
November	Feed lightly every 2–3 weeks with half-strength liquid fertiliser. Rotate the pot weekly.	Builds strong, even fronds for symmetry.
December	Maintain humidity. Mist daily in hot weather, check for pests, and remove old fronds.	Consistent care prevents browning and keeps colour fresh.
Early January	Groom the plant. Remove damaged fronds at the base, tidy rhizomes (e.g., Hare's-foot).	Start refining shape and density; avoid cutting too close to the show.
Mid–Late January	Top-dress with fresh moss or bark. Clean the pot rim and wipe fronds with a damp cloth.	Presentation phase — make the plant look cared for but natural.

Companion Resources

- Maidenhair Fern (Class 1411)
 - Designing a Fern & Foliage Collection (Class 1413)
 - Thrill–Fill–Spill – Designing Mixed Pots (PDF and 30-second video)
- (Part of the Berry Show – Pot Plant Education Series)