



Berry Show – Pot Plant Education Series

Maidenhair Fern - Class 1411

Graceful, delicate, and a favourite on the show bench — with the proper care, Maidenhair ferns thrive in pots year after year.

Why Enter This Class

The Maidenhair fern (*Adiantum* species) is graceful, fine-textured, and always admired on the show bench. Healthy, complete plants demonstrate excellent cultivation and reward patience with consistent, soft green growth.

Understanding Maidenhair Ferns

There are several species commonly grown for shows. Each differs slightly in vigour, texture, and tolerance of growing conditions.

Common Name	Species	Characteristics	Notes for Growing
Common Maidenhair	<i>Adiantum aethiopicum</i>	Finely divided fronds, dense habit.	Best indoors in bright shade.
Delta Maidenhair	<i>A. raddianum</i>	Triangular fronds, vigorous grower.	Easy to shape; ideal for pots.
Fragrans (Five-finger Fern)	<i>A. fragrans</i>	Broader, slightly tougher leaves.	Tolerates lower humidity, making it great for beginners.
Venus Hair Fern	<i>A. capillus-veneris</i>	Very fine fronds, delicate texture.	Needs steady moisture; avoid drying out.

Potting and Presentation

Select a wide, shallow pot to balance the airy fronds. Ensure good drainage by adding a thin layer of fine gravel at the base. Keep the rim clean and free of algae before benching. Top dress with fine gravel or sphagnum moss for a tidy finish.

Environment and Care Essentials

Light: Bright, indirect light is ideal. Avoid direct sunlight and draughty locations.

Water: Keep soil evenly moist at all times. Water deeply when the surface is barely dry. Always use tepid water to avoid root shock.

Humidity: Maintain humidity between 60–80%. Bathrooms, shaded verandahs, or pebble trays help maintain moisture in the air.

Soil & Potting Mix: Use a fine, moisture-retentive mix that drains freely:

- 2 parts premium potting mix
- 1 part fine pine bark
- 1 part perlite
- Optional: a small handful of compost or coco coir for moisture retention

Foliage Maintenance and Revitalising Brown Growth

Maidenhair ferns produce new fronds continuously. Regular trimming and consistent care maintain their lush, even form.

- **Deadheading:**
 - Remove brown or brittle fronds cleanly at the base using scissors. Don't trim halfway down a frond — it weakens the crown.
- **Reviving Browning Plants:**
 - Trim off all dead fronds, water thoroughly, and move to a shaded, humid position. Resume feeding once new fronds emerge.
- **Keeping Fronds Green:**
 - Keep moisture steady — never alternate between soggy and dry. Avoid overfeeding. Apply a mild liquid fertiliser (¼ strength) every 2–3 weeks during active growth.

At-a-Glance Care Calendar

Month	Key Tasks	Purpose / Notes
August–September	Select a healthy plant. Choose one with dense, even foliage and few brown stems. Avoid rootbound or waterlogged plants.	Early selection allows time for recovery after transplanting or division.
October	Repot or divide if needed.	Encourages vigorous spring growth and

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		compact form.
November	Encourage steady moisture and humidity. Keep soil evenly moist (never soggy). Mist foliage regularly and protect from wind.	Prevents browning and strengthens delicate fronds.
December	Fertilise lightly every two weeks. Use half-strength liquid fertiliser with a balanced NPK ratio (e.g., 20:10:20). Maintain high humidity.	Promotes fresh, green fronds and continuous new growth.
Early January	Groom the plant. Remove brown or dead fronds at the base. Lightly trim for symmetry. Refresh the top layer of soil or moss.	Start shaping and refining the presentation for the show.
Mid–Late January	Stabilise conditions. Avoid overfeeding or repotting now. Keep moisture even and foliage clean. Rotate the plant weekly for an even shape.	Minimises stress before judging.

Companion Resources

- Ferns in Focus: Other Fern Varieties (Class 1412)
 - Designing a Fern & Foliage Collection (Class 1413)
- (Part of the Berry Show – Pot Plant Education Series)