

# *Acrostichum daneifolium* Leather Fern<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

This beautiful fern (Figure 1) that is native to Florida grows larger than many other ferns, becoming 4 to 8 feet tall. The 3- to 6-foot-long, pinnately divided fronds emerge from the ground to form a beautifully textured, open form. The plant changes very little throughout the year, but provides a continual green mass of beautiful foliage.

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Acrostichum daneifolium*

**Pronunciation:** ack-ro-STISH-um dan-ee-if-FOLE-ee-um

**Common name(s):** leather fern

**Family:** *Adiantaceae*

**Plant type:** perennial; herbaceous

**USDA hardiness zones:** 9 through 11 (Figure 2)

**Planting month for zone 9:** year round

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round

**Origin:** native to Florida

**Uses:** mass planting; accent; border

**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

## Description

**Height:** 4 to 8 feet

**Spread:** 3 to 5 feet

**Plant habit:** upright

**Plant density:** open

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** coarse

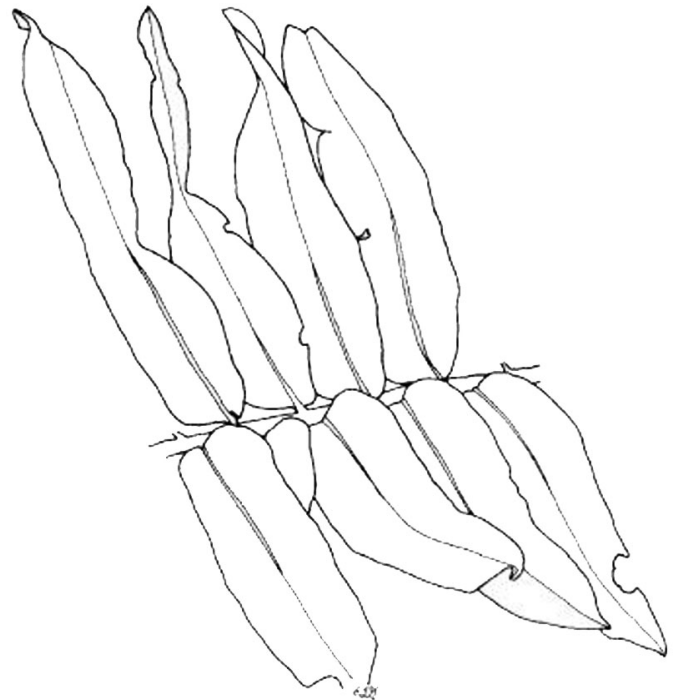


Figure 1. Leather fern.

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate

**Leaf type:** odd-pinnately compound

**Leaf margin:** undulate

**Leaf shape:** linear; oblong

**Leaf venation:** none, or difficult to see

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** 8 to 12 inches

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

### Flower

**Flower color:** no flowers

**Flower characteristic:** no flowers

### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** unknown

**Fruit length:** unknown

**Fruit cover:** unknown

**Fruit color:** unknown

**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not particularly showy; usually with one stem/trunk

**Current year stem/twig color:** not applicable

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** not applicable

### Culture

**Light requirement:** plant grows in the shade

**Soil tolerances:** extended flooding; acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay

**Drought tolerance:** little

**Soil salt tolerance:** good

**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

### Other

**Roots:** not applicable

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding plant:** plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

## Use and Management

Leather fern looks spectacular planted in mass in a large landscape. Its unusual texture and open habit combine to make this a great, eye-catching attraction. In a smaller residential landscape, leather fern can be used as a specimen planted alone to add texture to the garden. Many ferns grow poorly near the coast, however this one is tolerant of all but the most exposed ocean-front lots.

Provide a shaded or partially shaded spot for leather fern for the best growth and to keep plants healthy. Prolonged direct sun, especially in the summer, can burn foliage. Many ferns grow best with regular applications of fertilizer to maintain growth and green foliage. Ferns transplant well any time of year as long the soil ball is handled carefully.

## Pests and Diseases

This plant is relatively pest free.