

Growing and caring for Nephrolepis

There are a wide range of Nephrolepis which are vigorous growing ferns, making them popular with fern enthusiasts. Many species and cultivars with beautiful pendent fronds make them ideal for basket culture.



Common name Fishbone fern, Herringbone fern, Sword fern, Boston fern.

Cultivation Nephrolepis are adaptable tolerant ferns which grow in a wide variety of habitats in nature; from shade to sun. Many species are terrestrials and become great colonizers in the ground. In cultivation they grow well in a variety of containers including pots, tubs and baskets; some Nephrolepis have erect fronds while others have pendent drooping fronds. Some of the hardy species are suitable for indoor growth for short periods of time. Many Nephrolepis are easy to grow. They respond to grooming but tolerate some neglect. They grow in a range of soils and potting mixes but drainage has to be free and unimpeded. They prefer partial sun or filtered light in the garden or grow well in a shadehouse under 70% shadecloth. They need protection from winds. Many are tropical and are sensitive to frost and cold wet wintery weather.

Potting Mix Nephrolepis grow successfully in a good quality open potting mix which drains well. Orchid mix, charcoal, cow manure or perlite help to increase openness. They prefer to be underpotted rather than overpotted and do not need frequent repotting.

Watering Nephrolepis like plenty of water especially in summer and need to be kept on the drier side in winter. Many cultivars with fine delicate fronds are sensitive to overhead watering which can cause the fronds to rot; waterwells or wicks are sometimes used by fern enthusiasts. The fronds can be raised with the back of the hand and watered underneath.

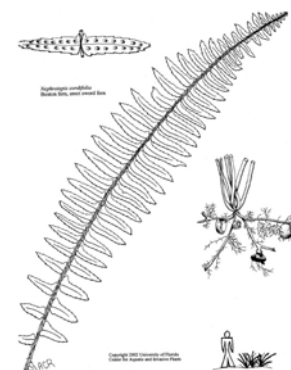
Fertilisation Organic or inorganic fertilizers or manures can be used for Nephrolepis in the ground during the warm seasons; for Nephrolepis in containers a combination of slow release fertilizers and liquid fertilizers at half strength on a regular basis is a useful program. However, avoid direct fertilizing over the foliage for Nephrolepis with fine fronds.

Some hardy Nephrolepis to grow

Nephrolepis cordifolia - ground/pots/tubs

Nephrolepis cordifolia 'Plumosa' - pots/tubs/baskets

Nephrolepis exaltata 'Bostoniensis' and its many cultivars - pots/baskets



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