



Growing and caring for Davallias

Davallias are popular with fern growers as their fronds and rhizomes make them ideal for growing in baskets.

Common name Hare's Foot, Rabbit's Foot, Squirrel's Foot, Silver Hare's Foot

Cultivation Davallias in nature are generally epiphytes (growing on hosts such as trees); some are lithophytes (growing on rocks); occasionally one or two are terrestrials (growing in ground). Some are deciduous and lose their fronds.

Davallias in cultivation can be successfully grown under 70% shadecloth in shadehouses, bushhouses or glasshouses or in a garden position which is protected from direct sun and wind. They are usually easy to grow and make excellent basket specimens; they are best grown in wire baskets which are lined with coconut fibre or sphagnum moss or paperbark or willow roots or even underfelt to allow the rhizomes to develop. They also grow well on tree fern/gum/mallee logs. Never use plastic baskets. Davallias require filtered light and need air movement around them and like humidity. Many species are tropical and are sensitive to frosts.

Potting Mix Davallias require a coarse open potting mix suitable for epiphytes which provides good drainage, aeration and at the same time moisture for the roots.

A good quality potting mix and orchid mix in the ratio of 50/50 with added materials such as tree fern fibre, peat moss, charcoal, cow manure, sphagnum moss or perlite make an ideal open medium for Davallia growth.

Watering Davallias like plenty of water during the warm growing periods, spring to autumn, and need to be kept moist but not wet in winter. Overwatering can be a winter problem causing the rhizomes to rot. Water with rainwater if possible.

Fertilisation Davallias are not heavy feeders; slow release fertilizers can be added to the potting mix prior to planting, during spring to autumn, the growing time, and occasionally application of half strength fertiliser such as fish emulsion or seaweed extract or old cow or sheep manure can be useful.

Some hardy Davallias to grow

Davallia canariensis - baskets/ground

Davallia feejensis - baskets

Davallia pyxidata - baskets

Davallia solida - baskets

Humata tyermanii

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