

Floating Fern

GENERAL

Origin	: sub-tropical, tropical
Vigour	: very slow-growing
Humidity	: semi-humid, very humid
Propagation	: division
Maintenance	: moderate

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: vulnerable
Dessication	: vulnerable
Stagnant water	: resistant
Salinity/ppm	: moderate (1800 ppm)
Hardiness	: +3°C

SHAPE

Type	: ferns, aquatic
Height	: 0.01 m-0.05 m
Spread	: 0.1 m-0.2 m
Foliage	: evergreen

Floating Ferns are tender aquatic perennials with light-green fronds. The short rhizomes creep beneath the surface, while the round foliage unfolds lengthwise on top. Concave, evergreen leaves show a prominent midrib and measure about 1 cm in diameter. Stiff hairs build a kind of cage that encloses an air bubble repelling water from the surface. In this way, the plant floats on standing water or along banks of slow-flowing streams. Unlike its terrestrial relatives, the Floating Fern grows its sori (containing the spores) on the upper surface. They are released from sporocarps that are branched like a corymb. Slowly but steadily growing, the plants form dense mats that blanket the water densely about 5 cm thick. They originate from tropical America, but easily naturalise in frost-free climates. These ferns are considered invasive in some regions such as Australia and New Zealand. Treatment with pesticides are a challenge in water, since most substances affect fish and the ferns easily associate with other aquatic plants such as water lilies. When using this plant, it should be borne in mind that it might escape cultivation easily, although they are easily controlled in smaller ponds in private gardens in Arriyadh. The attraction of Floating Ferns are the minute, exotic fronds. They grow fastest in full sun, but in Arriyadh will do better in partial shade. The water should be high in nutrients, but the plants will thrive in almost any environment. Propagation is extremely simple, by division.

