

Boston Fern Culture Sheet

Note: Production tips are to the best of our knowledge and experience. They are offered for consideration and investigation, but we do not warrant or assure any results. In any case, Milestone Agriculture will not be liable for crop failures, personal damages, or any other occurrences arising in relation to use of these tips or any product mentioned. Grower assumes full risks and responsibility.

For other ferns mentioned in this catalog, call us for cultural information.

- **Media:** High water-holding capacity, good aeration and drainage. Minimum 50% coarse peat, 20% - 30% perlite. Aged pine bark can be used, but it may increase fertilizer requirements. pH at 5.0 - 5.5. Low to medium rates of superphosphate and micronutrients may be added.
- **Light:** 1,500 - 3,000 FC, best at 2,000 - 2,500. Higher range preferable during short day periods, while lower ranges are advisable in summertime for temperature control. In Florida, use 50% shade in winter and 75% in summer.
- **Fertilizer:** Constant feed, 150 - 175 PPM nitrogen, at 3-1-2 ratio. During warm periods, a 2-1-2 ratio may be used. Milestone uses the TotalGro 18-24-18 Fern Special to assure proper media pH, alternating with TotalGro 14-4-14 Cal-Mag and clear water to prevent soluble salt buildup. If feeding overhead, rinse with clear water to prevent fertilizer burn. If using slow-release, use low - medium recommended rates.
- **Temperature:** Best daytime 85 F. Best nighttime 68 F. Will tolerate 50 F - 95 F. Note that in many greenhouses, basket temperatures are as much as 10 degrees warmer than benches.

- **Water:** Even moisture is desirable. Saturation will promote root rots. A light drought will slow runner production and cause some graying, but is generally reversible. Overhead irrigation should be applied early in the day to allow sufficient time for foliage to dry.

- **Growing Time:** From 72 cell to 8" HB, 7 – 8 months, variety and condition dependent. Check with us for specifics.

- **Disorders:**
 - Graying: increase moisture.
 - Long, weak, pendulous fronds: increase light.
 - Leaf tip, runner burn: leach to remove excess soluble salts.

- **Disease:** The best way to prevent disease is by proper water management. Make sure media is not waterlogged and that crown dries adequately between irrigations. Boston ferns are fairly drought tolerant and in case of disease pressure are best kept on the dry side. For prevention of root rots, a drench upon transplant is recommended. May recur in moist, cold conditions or if media is not properly drained. Rhizoctonia aerial blight is common in summertime, showing as brown lesions and eventual rot of inner core. Must prevent standing water and take chemical measures immediately.

- **Pest:** Caterpillars will chew foliage and leave green fecal piles. Are easily recognizable by scent. Fungus gnat larvae will inhabit wet media. Scales will show on underside of fronds. Mealybugs, mites, and thrips are possible but rare.

- **Pesticides / insecticides:** Boston ferns are sensitive to many common formulations. **Avoid** soaps, oils, spreader-stickers, or wetting agents. **Avoid** unproven tank-mixes. **Avoid** Cleary's 3336 or any other Thiophanate - methyl product. **Avoid** most liquid fungicide formulations, such as Chipco 26 GT or Daconil Weatherstick, even if these are specifically labeled for ferns. Milestone will gladly share, upon request, its fern pest and disease control history. We cannot, however, guarantee success and will not be liable, in any case, for damages caused. **Always read and follow labels; use pesticides at your own risk.**

Some formulations that we have found safe and effective are:

- **Fungicide drenches:** Truban, Terraclor.
- **Fungicide sprays:** Dithane T/O, Daconil Ultrex, Medallion, Contrast, Chipco 26019, Terraneb.
- **Insecticide sprays:** Talstar, Duraguard, Conserve, Dipel..

For more information, call us at 1-800-215-2210, ex. 33