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## Bird's Nest 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.

**Our Selections:** Regular (wide fronds), Japanese (narrow fronds), Osaka (narrow, crinkled fronds).

**Containers:** Usually grown in containers 4" - 6". Will make a beautiful large container but sufficient time will be needed. Since it has shallow roots, will work better in azalea pots in bulb pans.

**Media:** Focus on good aeration and drainage. May be grown in sphagnum moss or in a 50% - 60% coarse peat mix with plenty of added perlite and composted bark. Ideal pH at 5.5 - 6.5 but may be slightly lower.

**Light:** 2000 - 3,000 FC for best growth. Lower light will slow growth but darken color.

**Fertilizer:** Constant feed, 100 - 150 PPM nitrogen, with a balanced fertilizer. Avoid incorporated slow-release fertilizers, as those have been shown to cause over-doses, resulting in a dark-green stunted habit that takes months to repair. If top-dressing, use lowest rates labelled. Micro-nutrient amendments are usually not needed. Avoid foliar-type nutrient applications, as burn will occur.

**Temperature:** Best between 70 - 80 F. Is not cold hardy.

**Water:** Careful water management is key to success with Bird's Nest ferns. Best rooting occurs in a media that is not over-saturated, thus are best grown on the dry side. Once roots are established and new fronds appear, may be watered more regularly. Will not tolerate true drought, but will do best when allowed to reach low moisture content between irrigations. Depending on conditions, this may be several weeks between irrigations, initially.

**Growing Time:** From a 72 cell plug, 12 - 16 weeks (4"), 24 - 30 weeks (6"). Osaka will take longer.

**Disease:** Only significant disease problem is a bacterial blight, associated with *Pseudomonas* or *Erwinia*. Crown treatments with Kocide or Phyton 27 are effective, though some defoliation may occur. Plants are not to be planted too deep and moist media must not touch frond base.

**Pest:** Caterpillars will chew foliage and leave green fecal piles. Are easily recognizable by scent. Snails may also cause holes in foliage.

**Pesticides / insecticides:** We have seen toxicities associated with foliar nutrient applications. Otherwise, no particular toxicities are known to us. 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.

**Landscape:** Regular Bird's nest will work beautifully as a potted specimen in a large container in a shaded spot in the tropical garden. May also be grown as a epiphyte under a thick canopy or incorporated among crevices of rock formations accompanying tropical water features.

