



(800) 215-2210 • Fax: (407) 889-5443  
4707 Oak Hill St., Apopka, FL 32712  
dan@milestoneag.com  
www.milestoneag.com

## Rabbit's Foot 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.

**Types:** Milestone offers two types of Rabbit's foot ferns:

1. *Humata*: also known as White rabbit's foot. This fern is dark green with white rhizomes. It is highly desirable in retail, has a good shelf life, and is a slow grower.
2. *Davallia*: also known as Brown or Regular rabbit's foot. This fern is bright green with tan-brown rhizomes. It is faster and easier to grow than *Humata*, but does not have the same striking contrast between rhizome and foliage.

**Containers:** Grow in small pots (4" – 6") or 8" baskets.

**Media:** High water-holding capacity, good aeration and drainage. Milestone uses a mix comprised of 50% Canadian peat, 30% composted bark, 20% PBH, with 1# each superphosphate and micro-nutrients.

**Light:** Filtered light at 1,200 - 2,500 FC.

**Fertilizer:** Constant feed, 100 - 150 PPM nitrogen, with a balanced fertilizer. Always leach all ferns, periodically, to prevent soluble salts build-up. Milestone alternates every 3 applications of 20-20-20 with one of Cal-Mg (14-4-14) and one of clear water. In winter months, will benefit from reduced fertilizer rates. When using slow-release products, apply as top-dress at lower labelled rates. We do not recommend the incorporation of slow-release fertilizers.

**Temperature:** Best daytime 78 F; best night-time 72 F. Plants will tolerate 50 F - 90 F. Note that in many greenhouses, basket temperatures are as much as 10 degrees warmer than benches.

**Water:** Rabbits foot is drought intolerant and must be kept adequately moist at all times. However, water logging must be avoided. Whenever possible, baskets should be watered through a drip system that allows the foliage to remain dry. This will lower the potential for crown rots. While impossible to anticipate every scenario, it is not unreasonable to water every other week at first, but finish every other day.

**Growing Time:** From a 72 cell, 1 / pot, a 4" can be finished in 12-16 weeks, a 6" in 20-24 weeks, and an 8" HB in 8-9 months. Some growers prefer to grow an 8" basket in 6 months from 3 liners. If transplanting from a 4" pot, make sure to do so before it becomes root-bound and before the rhizomes are large enough to interfere with the transplant.

**Disease:** For prevention of root rots, a drench upon transplant is recommended. May recur in moist, cold conditions or if media is not properly drained. Milestone uses Banrot 40% WP as a preventative drench on all non-*Nephrolepis* ferns. Scout and spray for *Botrytis*, *Rhizoctonia*, and other leaf and crown diseases as necessary. Overall, properly grown rabbit's foot should not have any disease problems.

**Pest:** Caterpillars will chew foliage and leave green fecal piles. They are easily recognizable by scent. They are the only major pest of rabbit's foot and all others are rare. Fungus gnat larvae may inhabit wet media at early stages. Scale may show on underside of fronds when crops are held for prolonged periods. Mealybugs, mites, and thrips are possible but rare.

**Pesticides / insecticides:** 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. Always conduct local, small-scale trials before treating commercial crops.

The following formulations have been shown, under Milestone's conditions, to be **phytotoxic** to rabbit's foot ferns and should NOT be used in commercial production:

- Subdue Maxx: **drench will cause irreparable root damage.**
- Chipco 26GT, Cleary's 3336F, Daconil Weatherstick: **liquid formulations of most common fungicides are toxic to ferns.**
- Phyton 27, Kocide, Junction: **copper-based fungicides are toxic to some ferns.**
- Oils, soaps, adjuvants, spreader-stickers.