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Asparagus densiflorus 'Myersii': Meyers Asparagus Fern, Foxtail Fern[1]

Keighly Graves, Wendy Wilber, Tom Wichman, Claire Lewis, Gail Hansen, and Ryan Klein[2]

https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/

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Introduction

Meyers asparagus fern is a spreading perennial herb that has a fine texture with a stiff, upright growth habit (Figure 1). It has a height of up to 2 feet and spread of 4 feet. The habit is quite unlike that of the more common Sprenger asparagus fern, which has a feathery texture and arching to cascading form. The structures that most consider to be the leaves of this plant are narrow, light green, leaf-like branchlets called cladophylls (Figure 2). The asparagus fern has stems that emerge directly from the ground and has very short branches. These stems are woody and are often armed with sharp spines. The flowers are inconspicuous, white or pale pink in coloration, and occur in 1/4-inch-long axillary racemes (Figure 3). This plant produces showy red berries, which attract birds (Figure 4). This plant is suited to a variety of uses including mass planting or groundcover, container or above-ground planter, as a houseplant, border in the landscape, or used as an accent.



Figure 1. Full form—*Asparagus densiflorus* 'Myersii': Meyers asparagus fern.
Credit: Keighly Graves, UF/IFAS



Figure 2. Leaf—*Asparagus densiflorus* 'Myersii': Meyers asparagus fern.
Credit: Keighly Graves, UF/IFAS



Figure 3. Flower—*Asparagus densiflorus* 'Myersii': Meyers asparagus fern.
Credit: Perovskia via Adobe Stock



Figure 4. Fruit—*Asparagus densiflorus* 'Myersii': Meyers asparagus fern.
Credit: Keighly Graves, UF/IFAS

General Information

Scientific name: *Asparagus densiflorus* 'Meyersii'

Pronunciation: ass-SPAR-uh-gus den-sif-FLOR-us

Common name(s): Meyers asparagus fern; foxtail asparagus fern; foxtail fern

Family: *Asparagaceae*

Plant type: herbaceous; perennial

USDA hardiness zones: 9A through 11B (Figures 5 and 6)

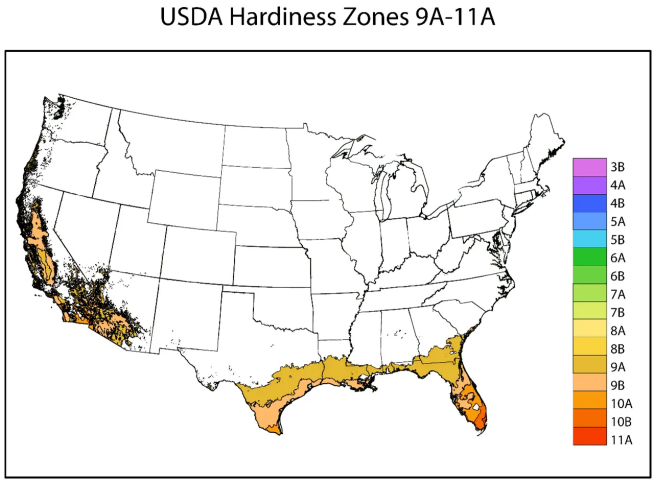


Figure 5. Shaded area represents potential planting zone—USDA Hardiness Zones 9A–11A; 11B within planting zone but not pictured on map.
Credit: This map is based on the 2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. Visit https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/ for specific zone information.

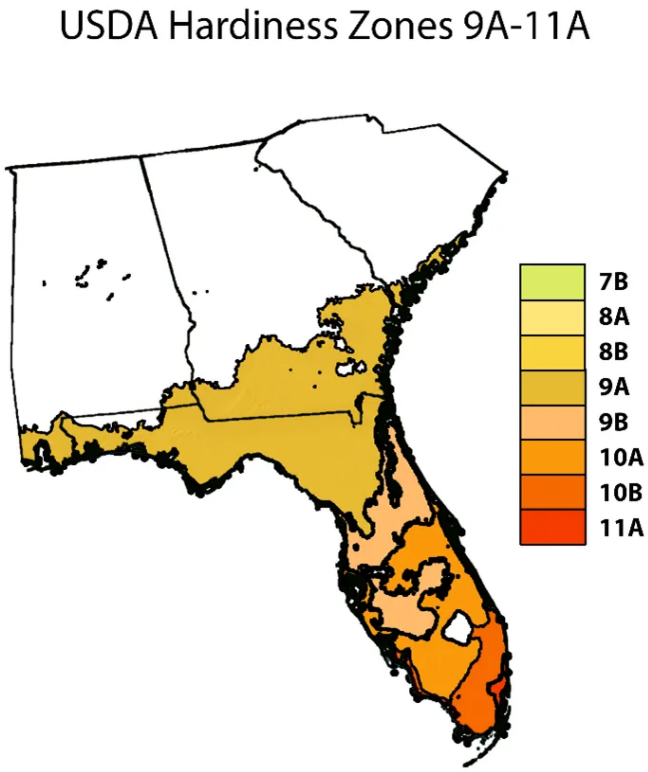


Figure 6. Shaded area represents potential planting zone in the SE Region—USDA Hardiness Zones 9A–11A; 11B within planting zone but not pictured on map.
Credit: This map is based on the 2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. Visit https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/ for specific zone information.

Planting month for zone 9: year-round

Planting month for zones 10 and 11: year-round

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Uses: mass planting; container or above-ground planter; groundcover; border; suitable for growing indoors; accent

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: 1 to 2 feet

Spread: 2 to 4 feet

Plant habit: upright

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: fast

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: linear

Leaf venation: none, or difficult to see

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white, pink

Flower characteristic: flowers periodically throughout the year; inconspicuous; fragrant

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: less than 1/2 inch

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: red

Fruit characteristic: showy; attracts birds

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

Current year stem/twig color: not applicable

Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in partial shade; plant grows in the shade

Soil tolerances: occasionally wet; acidic; slightly alkaline; clay; sand; loam

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: good

Plant spacing: 18 to 24 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: evergreen foliage

Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Toxicity: plant exhibits low toxic characteristics; all parts of the plant an unknown toxic component; ingestion may cause gastrointestinal issues; sap may cause contact dermatitis

Use and Management

Meyers asparagus fern thrives when planted in partial to full shade. It is moderately drought tolerant and adapts to a variety of soil types but requires well-drained soil. This plant also has good salt tolerance. Additional irrigation may be required during drought conditions. This plant should not be located in direct sunlight, as it will cause leaf scorching. Wet soils should be avoided as they can cause root rot. This plant may die back in the winter but will grow back from the roots in USDA hardiness zones 6A to 11B.

This plant may be used as a specimen, border, ground cover, bedding plant, or container plant. It will not cascade over a wall like the Sprenger asparagus fern cultivar because the Meyers fern's growth habit is upright, but could be used as a small low-growing, unclipped hedge or

border. It will make a nice accent plant in a small residential landscape or rock garden. This plant may also be grown in a bright indoor location.

Asparagus fern may be propagated by seeds and by division of the tubers.

Design Considerations

The Meyers asparagus fern is often called the foxtail fern because the small needle-shaped, leaf-like branches give it a fluffy appearance similar to a fox's tail. This upright, vase-shaped fern is perfect for containers and small-scale, special spaces in the landscape. Companion plants should have larger, smooth leaves to contrast with the tiny needle-like branches of the fern. Simple forms and dark green or smooth foliage of companion plants will highlight the delicate foliage. The light to medium green of the fern will work well with different flower colors, but deep or bright colors will show better than light pastels. Simple small or medium-size flowers will contrast more with the tiny foliage and white, yellow, and blue flowers will complement the bright red berries.

Pests and Diseases

Pest issues include mites. No diseases of major concern.

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[2] Keighly Graves, horticultural science specialist, Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program; Wendy Wilber, state program coordinator and Extension agent IV, UF/IFAS Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program; Tom Wichman, Extension program manager, Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program, UF/IFAS Center for Land Use Efficiency; Claire Lewis, state specialized agent II and director Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program, UF/IFAS Center for Land Use Efficiency; Gail Hansen, professor, sustainable landscape design, Department of Horticultural Sciences; Ryan Klein, assistant professor, arboriculture, School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences; UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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