

VALE'S GREENHOUSE



Quality Plants For The Chinook Zone

301 - 3rd Street N.W., Black Diamond

933-4814

Perennial Plant Of The Year 2004

JAPANESE PAINTED FERN - *Athyrium niponicum* "Pictum"



Each year the Perennial Plant Association sends each member a ballet to select a Perennial Plant of the year. These plants do not tend to be new introductions to the garden world but plants that have been tried and proven worthy on nomination. After the selection, the plant is then promoted all across Canada and continental U.S.A. Here in the Black Diamond and Calgary area there has been years that the plant chosen has not be hardy to our Agricultural Zone of 2 or 3.

When most people think of Calgary they think of dry. And for the most part it is true with low annual rainfall and hot dry winters with little snow cover, it is very dry in the Calgary area. So finding a good hardy fern adds possibilities to every garden. This shade loving fern is easy to grow and enjoys being on the dry side in the garden. With 12 to 18 inch fronds that are a soft shade of metallic silver-grey with hints of red and blue, this plant is outstanding in combination planting, adding colour, texture and habit in the perennial border. Try planting this plant with hostas, coral-bells or bleeding hearts to show off the ferns unusual colour.

Japanese Painted fern grows from 12 to 18 inches tall and as it multiplies it can make a clump more than 2 feet across. It is best planted in a northern exposure, it will tolerant a damp or dry location, the best frond colour results in dappled light. Add compost or mulch each fall to hold in any moisture and to give the plant a little winter protection. This low-maintenance fern is propagated in the spring by division, by homeowners who can then replant them adding to the garden.

For more information on the Perennial Plant Association, and past Selections for the Perennial Plant of the Year, check their web site at www.perennialplant.org.



Japanese Painted Fern

