

Plant Data Sheet

**Bracken fern / *Pteridium aquilinum*****Range**

Occurs throughout the world except in hot and cold deserts (1)

Climate, Elevation

Dry to wet forest, low to subalpine elevations (2)

Submontane to subalpine, occurs on water-shedding and water receiving sites in boreal, temperate, mesothermal, and tropical climates(3)

Local occurrence

Meadows, roadsides, clearings (2), fire disturbed sites (3)

Habitat preferences

Sterile sandy soils, acid sites, lake shores, bogs (2)

Plant strategy type/successional stage

Shade intolerant pioneer, succession species that is sufficiently shade tolerant to survive light spots in old growth forest (1)

Associated species

Coniferous forest, *Gaultheria shallon*, *Hylocomium splendens*, *Vaccinium parvifolium* (3), *Cornus Canadensis* and *Linnaea borealis* (1)

Collection restrictions or guidelines

Spore release in mid July for the PNW

Seed germination

Spores germinate without any dormancy requirement, usually in the spring after the spores are shed (1)

Vegetative regeneration

Aggressive rhizome system, can be up to 400" in diameter and hundreds of years old (1)

Seed life

Spore germination declines from 96% to 35% after 3 years of storage (1)

Recommended seed storage conditions**Propagation recommendations**

Division most successful method (1)

Soil or medium requirements

pH of 5.5 to 7.5 is optimal for spore germination, spore germination requires soil sterilized by fire (1), grows best on deep well-drained soils with good water holding capacity (4)

Installation form

Bare root, divisions

Recommended planting density**Care requirements after installed** (water weekly, water once etc.)**Normal rate of growth or spread; lifespan**

In first year, rhizomes may grow to 86 inches long, by end of second year, rhizome system can exceed 6' in diameter (1)

Sources cited

(1) Rook, Earl. 2002. *Pteridium aquilinum*, Bracken Fern. <http://www.rook.org/earl/bwca/nature/ferns/pteridiumaqui.html>

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(3) Klinka, K, Krajina, V.J., Ceska, A. and A.M. Scagel. 1989. *Indicator Plants of Coastal British Columbia*. University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver.

(4) Crane, M. F. 1990. *Pteridium aquilinum*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Fire Sciences Laboratory (2003, April). Fire Effects Information System, [Online]. Available: <http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/> [User, supply access date here].

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