

Matteuccia struthiopteris

[Synonyms : *Matteuccia germanica*, *Matteuccia pennsylvanica*, *Matteuccia pensylvanica*, *Matteuccia struthiopteris* var. *pennsylvanica*, *Matteuccia struthiopteris* var. *pubescens*, *Onoclea germanica*, *Onoclea pennsylvanica*, *Onoclea struthiopteris*, *Onoclea struthiopteris* var. *pennsylvanica*, *Osmunda struthiopteris*, *Pteretis nodulosa*, *Pteretis pennsylvanica*, *Pteretis pennsylvanica*, *Pteretis struthiopteris*, *Pterinodes struthiopteris*, *Struthiopteris europaea*, *Struthiopteris filicastrum*, *Struthiopteris germanica*, *Struthiopteris pensylvanica*]

SHUTTLECOCK FERN is a deciduous fern. Native to northern temperate regions of eastern Asia, Europe (including Britain) and eastern North America, it has shuttlecock-like, rosette of tall sterile fronds and shorter, dark brown fertile fronds.

It is also known as European ostrich fern, Fiddlehead, *Foderbräken* (Swedish), Garden fern, Hardy fern, *Kotkansiipi* (Finnish), *Kusa sotetsu* (Japanese), *Onoclée struthioptéris* (French), Ostrich feather fern, Ostrich fern, Ostrich plume fern, *Perovník pštroší* (Slovak), *Pérovník pštroší* (Czech), *Straussenfarn* (German), *Straussfarn* (German), *Strutbräken* (Swedish), *Strutsbräken* (Swedish), and *Trichterfarn* (German).

Struthiopteris is derived from Greek *strutho-* (ostrich) and *pteri-* (fern, feather) components with reference to the appearance of the fronds.

Abnaki North American Indians ate the boiled or roasted stout scaly rootstocks.

The sterile fronds were used medicinally by some of the North American Cree Indians during childbirth and to ease back pain.

Apparently early French settlers on the North American Continent learnt to eat the unfurled young sterile shoots or fiddleheads from local North American Indian tribes. Today these shoots can still be bought canned or frozen in Canada and the United States. They are eaten raw as salad, as a steamed or boiled vegetable (with a taste reminiscent of broccoli, *Brassica oleracea* var. *italica*) or added to soup and they are prized as a delicacy. (Some authorities note that this North American ‘delicacy’ is viewed as famine food by some of the Chinese.) The roots can also be eaten peeled and roasted.

Shuttlecock fern is cultivated as an ornamental garden plant and has also been used as deciduous ground cover.