Northern Maidenhair Fern
(Adiantum pedatum)

How to Identify:
• Graceful arching fronds.
• Wiry stem is black to purplish-brown in color.
• Fronds sixteen to twenty-six inches tall.
• Blades are flat and fan-shaped, they look a little bit like tiny palm trees.

Habitat:
• Moist forests.
• Sometimes on rocky slopes.
• Ferns help to hold the soil in place during rains and floods.

Until the sixteenth century, people thought ferns had invisible seeds!

Explore Idaho with Scout the Fox!
Flora

Northern Maidenhair Fern

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**More Fun Facts!**

- The leaves shed rainwater and appear to stay dry.
- Often grows in colonies.
- The developing fiddlehead in spring is red.
- Reproduces with spores not seeds.
- The tiny spores are spread by wind and water.
- Native ferns are important in the ecology of the forest.
- The photo shown was taken in Dworshak State Park.
- A fern leaf is called a frond.
- If you want to grow a fern in your garden, it is best to purchase it from a nursery.
- Small insects drink the juice of the leaves.
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Help Protect the Maidenhair Fern

- Support conservation of natural areas.
- Do not pick wild native plants in the forest.
- Stay on hiking trails.
- Keep your dog on a leash on hikes.

ACTIVITY TIME

1. Once the microscope was invented around 1590, what part of a fern plant could scientists see?

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2. Ferns have no flowers—why not?

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