

Boston Fern Care Card

Nephrolepis exaltata 'Bostoniensis'

Ka'ala Lush Nursery

Grown with aloha · Wai'anae, O'ahu

Quick answer: Boston ferns (*Nephrolepis exaltata*) thrive in bright, indirect light with soil kept evenly moist but never soggy, humidity above 50%, and temperatures of 65–80°F. Water when the top inch of soil starts to dry, feed monthly with diluted liquid fertilizer during the growing season, and keep them out of hot afternoon sun and drying wind.

Light	Bright, indirect light; shade to dappled sun outdoors	Feeding	Diluted balanced liquid fertilizer monthly, spring–fall
Water	Keep evenly moist — water when the top inch starts to dry	Size	2–3 ft fronds in a happy hanging basket
Humidity	50%+ (they love Hawaii's humid air)	Pets	Non-toxic to cats and dogs (ASPCA)
Soil	Rich, peat-based mix with good drainage	Best spot in Hawaii	Covered lanai, porch, or under a shade tree

Care essentials

How much light does a Boston fern need? Boston ferns want bright, indirect light — think of the dappled shade under a tree canopy, which is where wild ferns grow. Indoors, a spot near an east-facing window is ideal.

How often should I water a Boston fern? Water a Boston fern when the top inch of soil starts to dry — typically 2–3 times a week for hanging baskets in warm weather, less for potted ferns in shade. The goal is soil that stays lightly moist at all times, never bone-dry and never waterlogged.

What soil and fertilizer do Boston ferns like? Use a rich, peat-based potting mix that holds moisture but still drains freely — a standard indoor potting mix with a handful of perlite works well. Feed monthly during spring through fall with a balanced liquid fertilizer diluted to half strength.

How do you propagate Boston ferns? The easiest way to propagate a Boston fern is division: pull the plant from its pot, slice the root ball into halves or quarters with a clean knife, and pot each piece up. Each division looks rough for a few weeks, then pushes new fiddleheads.

Why is my Boston fern turning brown? Browning fronds almost always trace to one of four causes. Crispy brown tips mean dry air or missed waterings — move it somewhere more humid and water more consistently.

Quick FAQ

- **Are Boston ferns safe for cats and dogs?** Yes. Boston ferns are non-toxic to both cats and dogs according to the ASPCA, making them one of the safest lush houseplants for homes with pets.
- **Should I mist my Boston fern?** Misting gives only a brief humidity boost. In Hawaii's naturally humid air it's usually unnecessary. In dry rooms (or air-conditioned spaces), grouping plants together or using a pebble tray works better than misting.
- **Why is my Boston fern dropping leaves everywhere?** Leaflet shedding is the classic sign the fern went too dry — either the soil dried out completely or it's sitting in hot, dry moving air. Water consistently and move it out of wind or AC drafts.

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Plants by appointment in Wai'anae, O'ahu — email kaalalush@gmail.com to arrange a pickup

Just a little 'ohana nursery — mahalo for growing with us!