

Coontie

Zamia floridana

This Florida plant is the only cycad native to North America. It's also the preferred food source for larvae of the rare *Atala* butterfly. The caterpillar devours foliage at a rapid rate for about two weeks and then disappears. Plants will look fine after new foliage appears. The feather-like, light green, leathery foliage of coontie emerges from a large underground storage root in the early years before a trunk develops. Providing a tropical landscape effect, coontie's unique growth habit is ideally suited for use as a specimen or container planting. Growing best with some shade, coontie can tolerate full sun and grows on a variety of soils as long as it is well-drained. Watering should be done with moderation, if at all, once established.

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Type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 8b through 11

Uses: border; mass planting; accent; attracts butterflies; suitable for growing indoors

Origin: native to Florida

Height: 2 to 4 feet **Spread:** 3 to 5 feet

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Light requirement: part sun to part shade

Soil tolerances: acidic; alkaline; sand; loam

Drought tolerance: high

Soil salt tolerance: good

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant



Photo: UF/IFAS