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.

**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

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