

How to Keep Ferns Healthy and Green

— WITH EPSOM SALT —

Ferns, with their lush green fronds and graceful appearance, are a favorite among gardeners. And, if you have a Yoderbilt greenhouse, you can enjoy them all year long! While these plants are generally low maintenance, providing them with the right nutrients can significantly affect their growth and overall health. We've discovered something that is a game-changer in the health and vibrancy of our ferns.

Ferns WHAT'S THE SECRET?

Epsom salt! It's such a simple and effective way to boost the growth and health of your ferns. In this resource, we will explore the science behind Epsom salt, its benefits for ferns, safety considerations, and a step-by-step guide on how to use it.

The Science Behind Epsom Salt

When first hearing of adding Epsom salt “soaks” to your ferns, it can be scary. The thought of adding “salt” to your plants would make anyone nervous. But, trust us, we've been using it now for months and will never care for them in any other manner. Within hours you can see the dramatic difference, especially if you've allowed them to get a little dry and they've lost their vibrant color.

Epsom salt, chemically known as magnesium sulfate ($MgSO_4$), is a naturally occurring mineral compound. It is composed of magnesium, sulfur, and oxygen. Magnesium is an essential nutrient for plants, playing a crucial role in photosynthesis, the process by which plants convert light into energy. It is a central component of chlorophyll, the molecule that gives plants their green color and is vital for absorbing light energy. You will notice an uptake in the green color so quickly.

Sulfur, the other component of Epsom salt, is also important for plant growth. It is a component of certain amino acids and enzymes, which are necessary for various metabolic processes within the plant.

Benefits of Epsom Salt for Ferns

Enhanced Photosynthesis: Magnesium boosts the chlorophyll content in the leaves, improving the plant's ability to photosynthesize efficiently. This leads to lush, vibrant foliage.

Improved Nutrient Uptake: Magnesium helps in the absorption of other essential nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorus. This ensures that your fern gets a balanced diet of nutrients.

Stronger Cell Walls: Sulfur contributes to the production of proteins and enzymes that strengthen cell walls, resulting in sturdier and healthier plants. You will not believe how the leaves themselves change into a “thicker” sturdier structure. It's like magic!

Make sure to purchase
PLAIN Epsom salt with no
color or fragrance.



Safety Considerations

Epsom salt is generally safe for ferns and other plants when used correctly. However, overuse can lead to an imbalance of soil nutrients and potentially harm the plant.

How to Apply Epsom Salt to Your Ferns

To give your ferns the magnesium boost they need, follow this simple monthly application routine:

MATERIALS NEEDED

Epsom salt

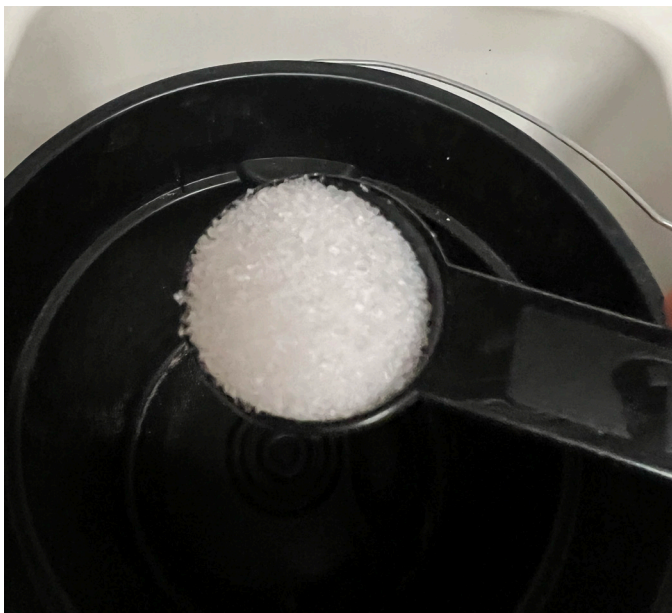
Measuring spoon

Watering can

**I use a 2-gallon bucket I picked up at Dollar General because I do immerse my fern pot into the solution.*

Warm water

Stirring stick



Safety Tips



Use Moderation

Stick to recommended dosages to avoid over-fertilization. I use 1 tablespoon per gallon of water and I “soak” the ferns in the solution. I will discuss this in more detail below. I soak them once per month – I use this method on or around the 15th of every month, so I remember.



Test Soil

If you are unsure about the magnesium levels in your soil, consider getting it tested before adding supplements. I have never tested my soil but it is recommended.



Observe Plant Response

Monitor your ferns after application. If you notice any adverse effects, such as yellowing leaves or stunted growth, reduce the frequency or amount of Epsom salt used. I have never had a bad outcome, but I do follow the above steps and do not overdo it.





Step-by-Step Instructions

1

Measure the Epsom Salt

Use 2 tablespoons of Epsom salt for every gallon of water. This ratio ensures a safe and effective concentration for your ferns.

**I use 1 tablespoon and can't imagine a better result. As mentioned above, adding salt to my ferns made me nervous at first and I cut the recommendation in half, but the results have been so amazing that I've continued using 1 tablespoon per every gallon of water.*

2

Dissolve the Salt

Fill your watering can (or bucket) with the required amount of warm (not hot) water and add the measured Epsom salt. Stir thoroughly until the salt is completely dissolved.

3

Water Your Ferns

Pour the Epsom salt solution evenly around the base of the fern. Make sure to water the soil rather than the leaves to avoid potential leaf burn. As mentioned above, I keep my ferns in the garden pots they came in and place them in my urns for display. This allows me to "sink" the pot into the bucket of solution. I keep them in the bucket for about 20 minutes and let them "soak" up the solution. I have poured the remaining solution at the base of the fern if there is any left.

4

Repeat Monthly

For best results, apply this solution once a month. Regular monthly applications will provide a consistent supply of magnesium and sulfur to your ferns.



What to Expect After a Salt Soak

After a few months of regular Epsom salt treatments, you should notice several positive changes in your ferns – I'll be honest, I notice it within hours especially if I've allowed them to get too dry, but watch for the following:

Lusher Foliage: The fronds should appear greener and more vibrant, indicating healthy chlorophyll production.

Stronger Growth: Expect more vigorous growth with new fronds emerging more robustly.

Overall Health Improvement: Your ferns will likely exhibit fewer signs of nutrient deficiency, such as yellowing leaves or stunted growth.

Using Epsom salt is a simple and cost-effective way to enhance the growth and beauty of your ferns. By understanding the science behind its benefits and applying it correctly, you can enjoy lush, healthy ferns that are the envy of any garden, greenhouse or outdoor space. Remember to use it in moderation, observe your plants, and enjoy the transformation that a little magnesium and sulfur can bring to your greenery.

- Shannon



ENJOY MORE

Growing guides & inspiration

all at [Yoderbilt.com](https://www.yoderbilt.com)

Yoderbilt
EST. GREENHOUSES 2011