Polypodium aurem, the Rabbit’s Foot Fern is native from Florida to Argentina. It has a thick creeping rhizome covered with golden-brown scales. The furry appearance of these rhizomes gives the plant its common name, which it shares with a number of other fern species.

Polypodium aureum rhizomes send up fronds in fiddleheads, or crosiers that unfurl to a height of 3-4 feet with a 2 foot spread and make striking hanging plants. Plants have a feathery appearance and the leaves have an attractive bluish cast. Healthy plants produce yellow-orange spores in clusters called sori on the underside of mature fronds. To ensure vigorous growth, the soil should be porous and allow free water passage. Soil should consist of 2 parts peat moss to 1 part loam to 1 part sand or perlite. Water evenly throughout the year, less frequently in winter, but never allow the soil to dry out. Fertilize every other week in the growth period with a balanced fertilizer and repot every other year or so, as needed. High humidity is essential for growing ferns. If your surroundings are not humid, mist the plant several times per day. This fern is relatively easy to grow from spores, which can be directly cast on damp sterile soil under terrarium moistness and wait for small plants to be established.

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