



Hay Scented Fern showing the rhizome and fine rootlets.

interspersed with flowers. A nice native fern, which fills in large patches, is the Hay Scented Fern, a medium sized upland fern. It is able to withstand several hours of direct sunlight each day. The rhizome, the underground stem from which the leaves grow, is only a few inches deep, and the roots are very thin and shallow. Any of the smaller to medium sized ferns, whether native or cultivars, are very attractive among flowers. Avoid the larger ferns on top of the tile bed, and in particular avoid Bracken with its deeper wide spreading rhizome.

Just beyond the edges of the tile bed is a good location for perennials with tougher clumped roots, such as Purple Coneflower or Bergamot in sunny locations. At forest edges, areas with some shade, use large ferns such as Ostrich, Interrupted, Cinnamon, or Royal Fern. Shrubs can be planted beyond them. Usually a root system does not spread much beyond the area directly under the stems. Do not use willows or cedars, which have moisture-seeking roots, but any of the attractive native shrubs from the article in the spring 2007 edition of *Sideroads* will be fine.

And so be brave. At least get started. Do it for the environment.



Herb Robert, a dainty ground cover for August.



Orange Hawkweed with striking orange flowers in June.



Northern Blue Violet flowers bloom in May.

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