



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Canna flaccida¹

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Introduction

The Golden Canna is native to moist areas in the southeastern United States (Fig. 1). Cannas are large perennial plants growing to about 5 feet tall and do well during the heat of summer provided they receive some moisture. The leaves are 18 to 36 inches long and light green, providing a very coarse texture to the landscape. Large yellow flowers appear in the summer among the foliage. Although they are often planted alone or in small numbers, they look best in mass plantings. They provide lots of contrast to the landscape and attract attention.

General Information

Scientific name: *Canna flaccida*

Pronunciation: KAN-uh FLACK-sid-uh

Common name(s): Golden Canna, Bandana-of-the-Everglades

Family: *Cannaceae*

Plant type: perennial; herbaceous; annual; aquatic plant

USDA hardiness zones: 8 through 10 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 7: Apr; May

Planting month for zone 8: Mar; Apr; May

Planting month for zone 9: Feb; Mar; Apr

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: Feb; Mar; Apr

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: container or above-ground planter; border

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant



Figure 1. Golden Canna.

Height: 3 to 5 feet

Spread: 1 to 1.5 feet

Plant habit: upright

Plant density: open

Growth rate: fast

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Description

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf arrangement: alternate
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: ovate
Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: 18 to 36 inches
Leaf color: purple or red
Fall color: not applicable
Fall characteristic: not applicable

Flower

Flower color: yellow
Flower characteristic: summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown
Fruit length: unknown
Fruit cover: unknown
Fruit color: brown
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems
Current year stem/twig color: not applicable
Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: extended flooding; slightly alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam
Drought tolerance:
Soil salt tolerances: poor
Plant spacing: 12 to 18 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Plants may be started indoors in large pots before they are set out after all danger of frost has passed. Rhizomes can be directly planted in the ground in late spring and into the summer. They can be planted directly in shallow water at the edge of a pond. Some staking may be necessary as is the removal of dead blooms in order to provide for a neat appearance. In southern climates, rhizomes are left in the ground to grow and flower each year. Cut back to within 6 to 8 inches, and dig the rhizomes if you prefer.

Cannas enjoy full sun locations where they produce an abundance of flowers over a long period of time. The plant grows but flowers poorly in the shade. Set rhizomes about 12 inches apart for a solid mass of coarse-textured bright color during the summer. The roots may be divided in the spring with each division having one or more eyes.

Japanese beetle feeds on young leaves and flower buds in areas where these beetles are present. Use milky spore to help control larvae in the soil. Some caterpillars feed on the leaves.

Pests and Diseases

Bud rot causes numerous spots on unfolding leaves. The spots run together along veins. They may be whitish at first but soon turn black. Infected flower buds turn black and die before opening. The disease moves down the leaf stalk, killing young stems and buds. On older leaves, the disease spreads slowly, forming irregular, yellowish spots with water-soaked margins. Use only healthy roots.

Canna mosaic virus causes leaves to have pale yellow stripes from the midrib to the margin. The leaves are wrinkled, curled, chlorotic and are often dusty brown. The stems, sepals and petals have yellow bands. Destroy infected plants and control the aphids which spread the disease.

Aster yellows causes irregular, diffuse, dull yellowing of young leaves which turn brown with age. Infected plants are destroyed. The disease is spread by aphids.