



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Crinum americanum*¹

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Introduction

The Swamp Lily is a herbaceous perennial native to the southeastern U.S (Fig. 1). that rises from a 3 to 4 1/2-inch thick, fleshy bulb. The linear, leathery leaves grow in a rosette. These glossy leaves are bright green and reach a length of 1 to 4 feet. White or pink-striped flowers sit atop a succulent, cylindrical flower stalk that is 1 to 3 feet tall. A 6-inch-long floral tube bears 6 petals and sepals, and rosy stamens that are tipped with yellow emerge from the throat of this tube. These striking, fragrant flowers appear in the spring, summer and fall seasons of the year. The fruits of the Swamp Lily are lobed seed capsules that are 1 1/2 to 2 inches thick.

General Information

Scientific name: *Crinum americanum*

Pronunciation: KRYE-num uh-mair-rick-KAY-num

Common name(s): String-Lily, Swamp-Lily

Family: *Amaryllidaceae*

Plant type: perennial; herbaceous

USDA hardiness zones: 7 through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: mass planting; specimen; accent

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



Figure 1. String-Lily.

Description

Height: 1 to 2 feet

Spread: 1 to 2 feet

Plant habit: spreading

Plant density: open

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: coarse

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

- Leaf arrangement:** spiral
- Leaf type:** simple
- Leaf margin:** entire
- Leaf shape:** linear
- Leaf venation:** parallel
- Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen
- Leaf blade length:** 18 to 36 inches; more than 36 inches
- Leaf color:** purple or red
- Fall color:** no fall color change
- Fall characteristic:** not showy

Flower

- Flower color:** white; pink
- Flower characteristic:** year-round flowering; pleasant fragrance

Fruit

- Fruit shape:** round
- Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches
- Fruit cover:** dry or hard
- Fruit color:** green

Fruit characteristic: showy

Trunk and Branches

- Trunk/bark/branches:** usually with one stem/trunk
- Current year stem/twig color:** not applicable
- Current year stem/twig thickness:** not applicable

Culture

- Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun
- Soil tolerances:** extended flooding; clay; sand; acidic; slightly alkaline; loam
- Drought tolerance:** moderate
- Soil salt tolerances:** good
- Plant spacing:** 24 to 36 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

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

String Lily will spread quickly to form an attractive ground cover and is lovely when used as an edge or border around a pool of water. Plant them on 3 to 4 foot centers to form a solid mass effect.

This lily can be found in swamps, marshes and river banks from Florida to Texas. However, it grows best in soils that are kept moderately moist. Plant this lily in full sun to partial shade for best growth. The Swamp Lily is moderately tolerant of salt spray and will grow well in coastal communities. The plant is poisonous and should not be eaten.

Swamp Lily can be successfully raised from offsets or seeds.

Pests and Diseases

This plant is relatively pest free except for chewing grasshoppers.