



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Dracaena marginata*¹

Edward F. Gilman²

Introduction

Multiple thin, curving stalks with narrow ribbonlike, green leaves edged in purplish-red distinguish this *Dracaena* from its multitude of cousins (Fig. 1). The upright, unbranched stems form a delicate, somewhat abstract silhouette, perfect for accent planting or for low-maintenance container culture as a house plant or outdoors. It is a fine specimen to silhouette against a wall at night with uplighting.

General Information

Scientific name: *Dracaena marginata*

Pronunciation: druh-SEE-nuh mar-jin-NAY-tuh

Common name(s): Red-Edged Dracaena, Madagascar Dragon-Tree

Family: *Agavaceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; border; suitable for growing indoors; accent

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: 8 to 15 feet

Spread: 3 to 8 feet

Plant habit: upright

Plant density: open

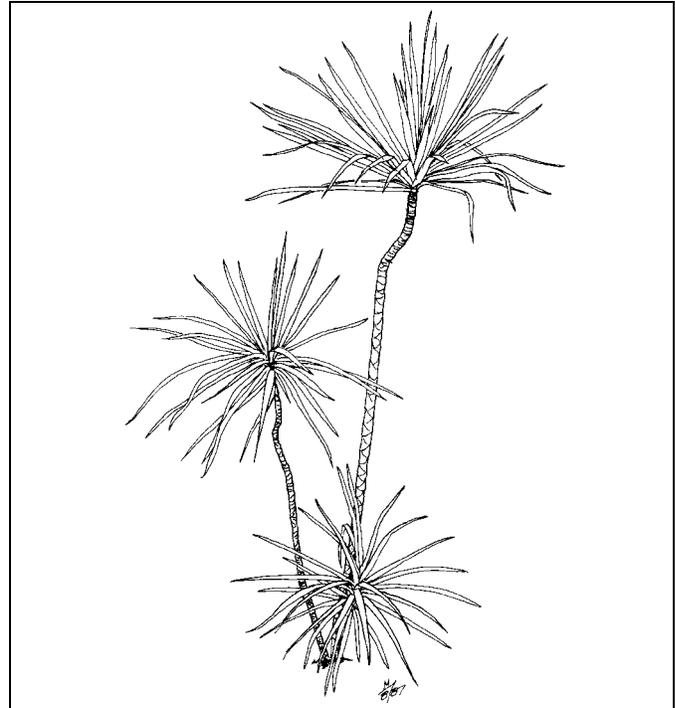


Figure 1. Red-Edged Dracaena.

Growth rate: slow

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: spiral

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-185, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October 1999. Please visit the EDIS web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap, or national origin. For information on obtaining other extension publications, contact your county Cooperative Extension Service office. Florida Cooperative Extension Service / Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences / University of Florida / Christine Taylor Waddill, Dean



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf shape: linear
Leaf venation: parallel
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: 18 to 36 inches
Leaf color: variegated; purple or red
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white
Flower characteristic: summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: less than .5 inch
Fruit cover: fleshy
Fruit color: unknown
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

Current year stem/twig color: reddish
Current year stem/twig thickness: very thick

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun
Soil tolerances: clay; sand; acidic; slightly alkaline; loam
Drought tolerance: high
Soil salt tolerances: poor
Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: usually not a problem
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Dracaena grows in shade or sun and is tolerant of drought and a wide variety of soil types, though preferring an organic soil with plenty of moisture. Two or more branches form after pruning a stem. This technique can be used to increase the density of the plant. This can be beneficial since lower leaves drop from the stems as the plant grows taller leaving the bottom of the plant bare.

Propagation is by tip cuttings. The foliage of the cultivar 'Tricolor' is more colorful than the species, appearing almost white from as distance.

Mites, thrips, and chewing insects are a problem.

Pests and Diseases

Dracaenas are susceptible to leaf spot diseases.



Figure 3. Foliage of Red-Edged Dracaena