



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Yucca aloifolia*¹

Edward F. Gilman²

Introduction

Spanish Bayonet makes a dramatic landscape statement, its dark green, stiff, dagger-like leaves projecting from thick, inclining trunks (Fig. 1). Spikes of bright white blossoms appear in springtime to late summer depending on the year in the center of the plant above the foliage. With the sharp needled tips removed with shears, Spanish Bayonet makes a wonderful accent at entryways or in a shrub border. Their striking textures adds an accent to any garden. Plants eventually form attractive, multi-stemmed clumps. High salt tolerance makes Spanish bayonet ideal for seaside plantings.

General Information

Scientific name: *Yucca aloifolia*

Pronunciation: YUCK-kuh al-loe-iff-FOLE-lee-uh

Common name(s): Spanish Bayonet, Aloe Yucca

Family: *Agavaceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 6 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: specimen; naturalizing; border; accent; attracts butterflies; screen

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

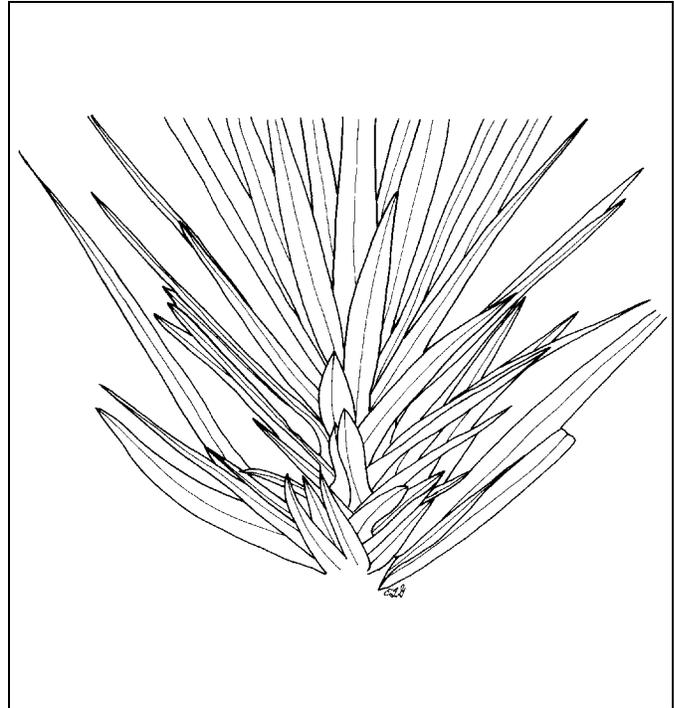


Figure 1. Spanish Bayonet.

Description

Height: 10 to 15 feet

Spread: 3 to 5 feet

Plant habit: upright

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: slow

Texture: coarse

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

- Leaf arrangement:** alternate
- Leaf type:** simple
- Leaf margin:** serrate
- Leaf shape:** linear
- Leaf venation:** parallel
- Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen
- Leaf blade length:** 12 to 18 inches
- Leaf color:** green
- Fall color:** no fall color change
- Fall characteristic:** not showy

Flower

- Flower color:** white
- Flower characteristic:** summer flowering; spring flowering; pleasant fragrance

Fruit

- Fruit shape:** oval
- Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches
- Fruit cover:** dry or hard
- Fruit color:** brown

Fruit characteristic: suited for human consumption

Trunk and Branches

- Trunk/bark/branches:** typically multi-trunked or clumping stems; can be trained to grow with a short, single trunk; not particularly showy
- Current year stem/twig color:** green
- Current year stem/twig thickness:** very thick

Culture

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

Other

Roots: sprouts from roots or lower trunk

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: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

Spanish Dagger is often confused with Spanish Bayonet. Leaf margins on Spanish Dagger (*Yucca gloriosa*) are smooth, whereas those on *Yucca aloifolia* (Spanish Bayonet) are rough. The outer half of the leaves on Spanish Dagger also bend toward the ground, whereas those on Spanish Bayonet do not.

Growing in full sun or partial shade, Spanish Bayonet does well on any well-drained soil and should be watered sparingly, if at all. Plants can also tolerate nearly full shade.

The cultivar 'Tricolor' has green and white leaves.

Propagation is by division of the suckers or by cuttings of any size at any season. Occasionally plants are grown from seed.

Pest problems include scale and *Yucca* moth larvae which may bore through and weaken the terminal shoot.

Pests and Diseases

Leaf spot can be a problem in areas with poor air circulation.