



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## *Agave angustifolia*<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

Variegated Caribbean Basin is not common in cultivation, having green leaves with marginal bands of bright white (Fig. 1). The leaves are borne from a very short trunk. Its tight rosette of stiff, sword-shaped leaves, each up to 3 feet long and 2 inches wide, makes a dramatic statement in the landscape and is much favored for use in rock gardens. The sharp spine at the tip of its toothed leaves is often removed to protect people and pets. Locate it at least 6 feet away from walks and other areas where people could contact the spiny foliage.

### General Information

**Scientific name:** *Agave angustifolia*

**Pronunciation:** uh-GAW-vee an-gus-tif-FOLE-ee-uh

**Common name(s):** Variegated Caribbean Agave

**Family:** *Agavaceae*

**Plant type:** shrub

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

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round

**Origin:** native to North America

**Uses:** border; accent; mass planting

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

### Description

**Height:** 3 to 4 feet

**Spread:** 3 to 4 feet

**Plant habit:** round

**Plant density:** open

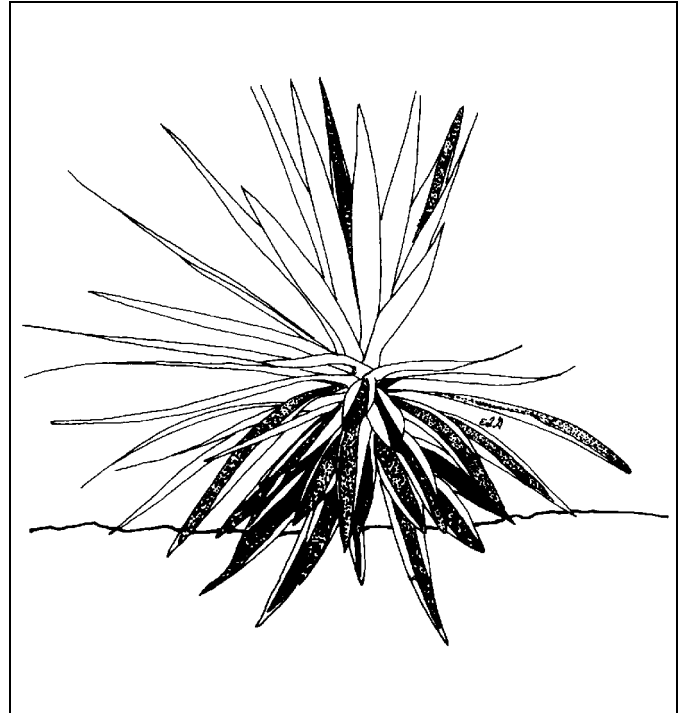


Figure 1. Variegated Caribbean Agave.

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** coarse

#### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** spiny

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Leaf shape:** linear  
**Leaf venation:** none, or difficult to see  
**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen  
**Leaf blade length:** more than 36 inches  
**Leaf color:** blue or blue-green  
**Fall color:** no fall color change  
**Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

**Flower color:** white  
**Flower characteristic:** flowers periodically throughout the year

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** oval  
**Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches  
**Fruit cover:** dry or hard  
**Fruit color:** brown  
**Fruit characteristic:** persists on the plant

**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not particularly showy; 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:** alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam  
**Drought tolerance:** high  
**Soil salt tolerances:** unknown  
**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:** no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

## **Use and Management**

Caribbean Agava is a hardy survivor, tolerating heat, drought, and salty seaside conditions. Little if any irrigation is needed to maintain the plant once established. It grows best in full sun but can adapt to some shade. After 10 years or more (though not a century), a lofty flower spike is produced, with terminal panicles of pale yellow to white blooms. The plant can be used in residences as a free-standing specimen and is usually not planted in mass due to its unusual color and form. Due to its large size and striking habit and color, most residences only need one of these. Larger commercial landscapes have room for multiple mass plantings which can create a dramatic impact.

Propagation is by detaching the well-rooted suckers appearing at the base.

### **Pests and Diseases**

None of major concern.