



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Agave attenuata¹

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Introduction

More common in California landscapes than Florida, Spineless Century Plant is more suited for smaller landscapes due to its smaller stature than the Century Plant (Fig. 1). Foliage is a soft light blueish-green and does not terminate in a spine. The emerging group of leaves forms an attractive cone shape in the center of the plant. It can be included in gardens frequented by children, whereas the spines on the Century Plant can be hazardous with youngsters nearby.

General Information

Scientific name: *Agave attenuata*

Pronunciation: uh-GAW-vee at-ten-yoo-AY-tuh

Common name(s): Spineless Century Plant

Family: *Agavaceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 9 through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not 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: 2 to 3 feet

Spread: 3 to 4 feet

Plant habit: round

Plant density: open

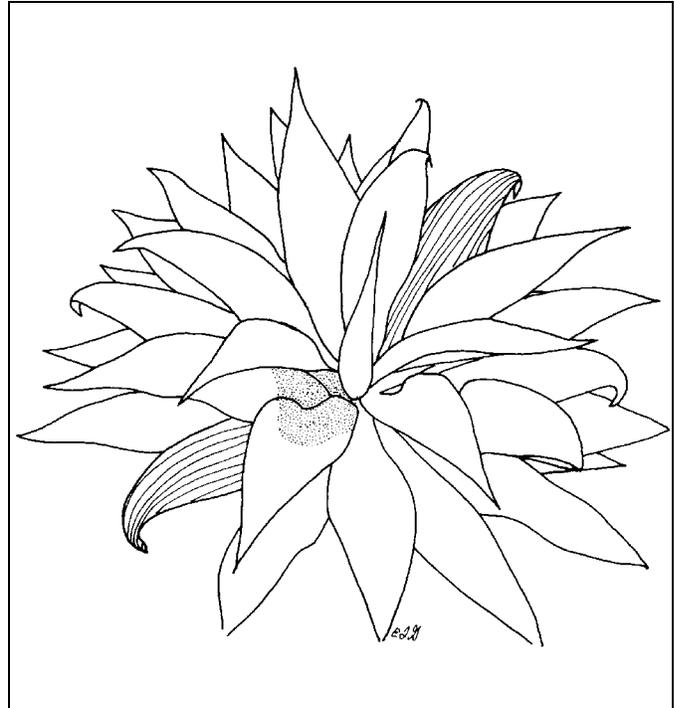


Figure 1. Spineless Century Plant.

Growth rate: slow

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: terminal spine

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf shape: lanceolate
Leaf venation: none, or difficult to see
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: 18 to 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

Spineless Century Plant is a hardy survivor, tolerating heat, drought, and moderate salt exposure. Little irrigation is needed once the plant is 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 stem producing the flower dies soon after. Plants can be grouped together in a mass or planted alone as a specimen in a rock garden. 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, or by uprooting germinating seedlings near the plant.

Pests and Diseases

Few problems appear to affect most specimens.