



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Aglaonema commutatum*¹

Edward F. Gilman²

Introduction

For locations with reduced light, Aglaonemas are outstanding (Fig. 1). Their dark green, glossy variegated leaves, 9 to 12 inches long and four inches wide, have attractive silver markings along the primary veins. Leaves are produced on short, erect, glossy green stems reaching two feet in height over several years. The fruit is a bright red oval about a third of an inch long and is held on an erect stalk among the leaves. It is usually not produced in abundance and is normally not seen through the dense foliage.

General Information

Scientific name: *Aglaonema commutatum*

Pronunciation: ag-lay-o-NEE-muh kom-yoo-TAY-tum

Common name(s): Aglaonema

Family: *Araceae*

Plant type: perennial; herbaceous

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

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: border; mass planting; container or above-ground planter; ground cover; edging; suitable for growing indoors

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: 2 to 3 feet

Spread: 2 to 3 feet

Plant habit: upright

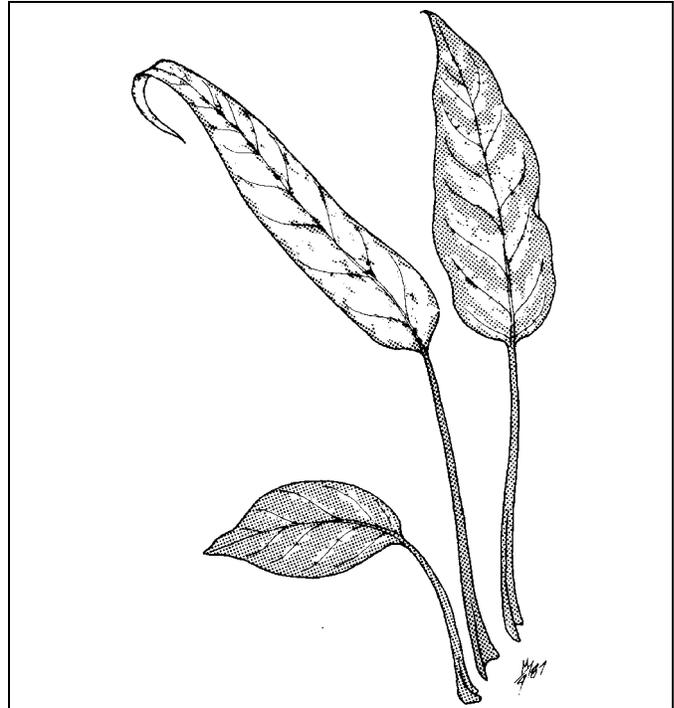


Figure 1. *Aglaonema*.

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: spiral

Leaf type: simple

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-24, 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 margin: entire
Leaf shape: lanceolate; oblong
Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: 8 to 12 inches
Leaf color: green; silver/gray
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white
Flower characteristic: summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval
Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch
Fruit cover: fleshy
Fruit color: red
Fruit characteristic: showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems
Current year stem/twig color: green
Current year stem/twig thickness: very thick

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in the shade
Soil tolerances: clay; sand; acidic; loam
Drought tolerance:
Soil salt tolerances: poor
Plant spacing: 24 to 36 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable
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

Any fertile, nematode-free soil or artificial media is suitable for growth, yet Aglaonemas will survive in peat and perlite, in sand, or can be grown hydroponically. They enjoy moist soil which is allowed to dry slightly before watering. Be careful not to overwater but do not let the soil dry for more than a few days. Aglaonemas require shade since direct sun will turn leaves yellow. They perform admirably in conditions too dark for most other tropicals. They will succeed in low light, either as house plants or in sheltered locations on the north side of buildings, or under heavy shade of trees. They are attractive planted as single specimens, or in mass to create a tropical, coarse-textured effect. Plant on two to three-foot centers. Temperatures below 45-degrees F. can injure the foliage. Overwatering causes root rot and yellowing of the leaves.

Popular cultivars include 'Silver Queen' and 'Silver King', which have different leaf variegation patterns.

Propagation is normally by cuttings, as seeds will not produce variegated plants.

Mites can infest leaves and can cause rapid decline in plant health.

Pests and Diseases

No diseases are of major concern. Roots can rot if the soil is kept too wet.