Chlorophytum comosum
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Introduction

Spreading by long, arching shoots which develop plantlets at their tip, Spider Plant forms many mounds of narrow, green and white-striped or solid green leaves, depending on the cultivar (Fig. 1). Small, white flowers are occasionally produced along these shoots. Long used in hanging baskets, Spider Plant is also well-suited to use in planters or as a groundcover. The plantlets will cascade over a wall or planter forming a fountain effect. The variegated cultivars brighten up any shaded location. Use it as an edging along walks or in front of shrub borders.

General Information

Scientific name: Chlorophytum comosum
Pronunciation: kloe-roe-FIT-um koe-MOE-sum
Common name(s): Spider-Plant
Family: Liliaceae
Plant type: perennial; herbaceous
USDA hardiness zones: 9B 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: ground cover; container or above-ground planter; edging; hanging basket; suitable for growing indoors; cascading down a wall
Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: .5 to 1 feet
Spread: 2 to 4 feet
Plant habit: spreading
Plant density: moderate
Growth rate: moderate
Texture: fine

Figure 1. Spider-Plant.
Chlorophytum comosum -- Spider-Plant

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: most emerge from the soil, usually without a stem
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: linear
Leaf venation: parallel
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: 12 to 18 inches
Leaf color: variegated
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

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

Fruit

Fruit shape: pod or pod-like
Fruit length: less than .5 inch
Fruit cover: dry or hard
Fruit color: unknown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable
Current year stem/twig color: gray/silver
Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in the shade
Soil tolerances: clay; sand; acidic; slightly alkaline; loam;
Drought tolerance: high
Soil salt tolerances: poor
Plant spacing: 18 to 24 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more
**Invasive potential:** aggressive, spreading plant  
**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

## Use and Management

Growing best in light to deep shade, Spider Plant can tolerate a wide range of soil conditions but does need attention paid to its watering schedule. Severe drought can cause leaf burn, detracting from the appearance of the whole plant. It may also exhibit leaf tip burn when exposed to some fluoridated water. Plant on 12 to 18-inch centers for quick establishment as a groundcover. Some frost can be tolerated.

Propagation is commonly by potting of the plantlets, division of the main plant, and sometimes by seed.

‘Vittatum’ is slower growing and leaves have a wide white strip down the center of the leaf. ‘Variegatum’ has leaves with white margins.

Problems include spider mites and mealy bugs.

## Pests and Diseases

Plants are susceptible to root rot in poorly drained soils.