



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Chlorophytum comosum¹

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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

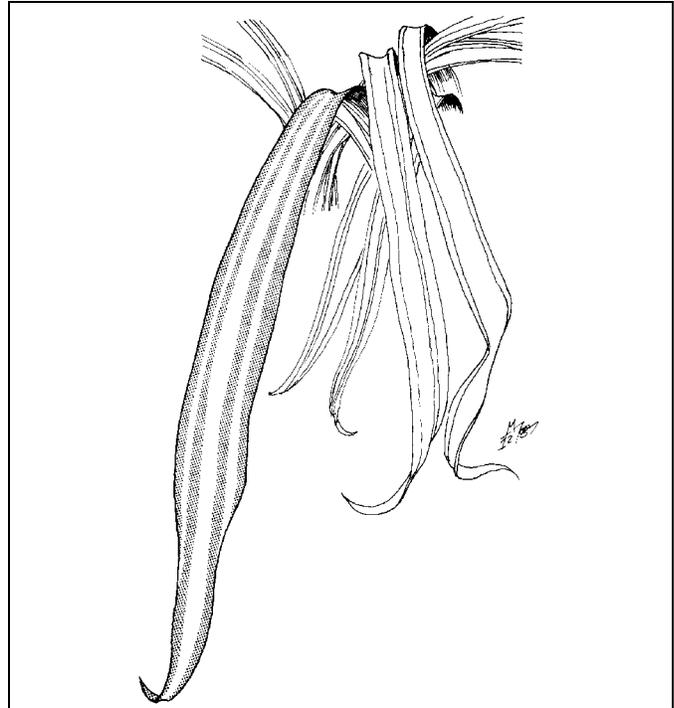


Figure 1. Spider-Plant.

Description

Height: .5 to 1 feet

Spread: 2 to 4 feet

Plant habit: spreading

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: fine

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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.