Introduction

The Giant Spider Lily is a herbaceous perennial that rises from a 3 to 4 1/2-inch thick, fleshy bulb (Fig. 1). The linear, leathery leaves grow in a rosette. These glossy leaves are greenish-red and reach a length of 2 to 4 feet. Red and pink fragrant flowers sit atop a succulent, cylindrical flower stalk that is 1 to 3 feet tall. A 6-inch-long floral tube bears 6 petals and sepalas, and rosy stamens from the throat of this tube. These striking, fragrant flowers appear most abundantly in the spring, summer and fall seasons of the year. The fruits of the Swamp Lily are lobed seed capsules that are 1 ½ to 2 inches thick.

General Information

Scientific name: Crinum x amabile
Pronunciation: KRYE-num x uh-MAB-ill-lee
Common name(s): Giant Spider-Lily
Family: Amaryllidaceae
Plant type: bulb/tuber; perennial; herbaceous
USDA hardiness zones: 8B through 11 (Fig. 2)
Planting month for zone 8: year round
Planting month for zone 9: year round
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: mass planting; specimen; accent
Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: 3 to 5 feet
Spread: 3 to 5 feet
Plant habit: spreading
Plant density: open
Growth rate: moderate
Texture: coarse

Foliage
Leaf arrangement: spiral
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: linear
Leaf venation: parallel
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: more than 36 inches
Leaf color: purple or red
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

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: extended flooding; clay; sand; acidic; slightly alkaline; loam
Drought tolerance: moderate
Soil salt tolerances: unknown
Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other
Roots: usually not a problem
Winter interest: plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers
Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Planted in mass, Giant Spider Lily forms an attractive tall ground cover and is lovely when used as an edge or border around a pool of water. It is often planted alone in a small landscape as a specimen to accent an area. Locate it near a walk or patio to enjoy the fragrant flowers.

This Lily is best grown in soils that are moderately moist. Irrigation during dry weather, especially in the summer, is recommended. Plant this lily in full sun to partial shade for best growth and flowering. The Giant Spider Lily is moderately tolerant of salt spray and will grow well in coastal communities away from the direct salt spray.

Pests and Diseases

Leaf spot disease appears to be the biggest problem.