



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## ***Dieffenbachia maculata* ‘Rudolf Roehrs’<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Introduction**

The new growth of spotted dumb cane is cream-white or bright green and finely spotted with white, whereas the edges and center vein remain green (Fig. 1). The striking variegated leaves of spotted dumb cane have long made it a popular indoor house plant but this large, graceful exotic also makes a fine outdoor specimen or accent. The tropical effect can be enhanced with mass plantings, if room permits. Space individual plants two to three feet apart.

### **General Information**

**Scientific name:** *Dieffenbachia maculata* ‘Rudolf Roehrs’

**Pronunciation:** deef-en-BACK-ee-uh mack-yoo-LAY-tuh

**Common name(s):** Spotted Dumbcane

**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:** container or above-ground planter; mass planting; border; accent; suitable for growing indoors

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

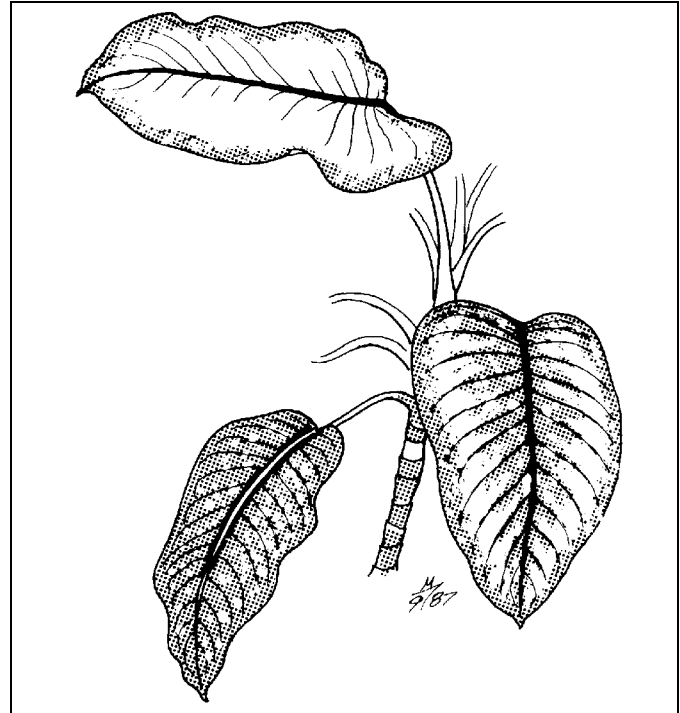
### **Description**

**Height:** 4 to 6 feet

**Spread:** 2 to 3 feet

**Plant habit:** upright

**Plant density:** open



**Figure 1.** Spotted Dumbcane.

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** coarse

#### **Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** spiral

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Leaf shape:** ovate  
**Leaf venation:** pinnate  
**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen  
**Leaf blade length:** 8 to 12 inches  
**Leaf color:** variegated  
**Fall color:** no fall color change  
**Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

**Flower color:** green  
**Flower characteristic:** summer flowering

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** unknown  
**Fruit length:** unknown  
**Fruit cover:** unknown  
**Fruit color:** orange  
**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** usually with one stem/trunk  
**Current year stem/twig color:** green

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** 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:** usually not a problem  
**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**

Although known to tolerate low light conditions, dieffenbachia can tolerate higher light when provided with sufficient moisture, but direct sun should be avoided. A sheltered location is best, perhaps near an entranceway, where its bold foliage can be appreciated and also protected from the wind. Spotted dumb cane is rather forgiving of drought and erratic fertilizer schedules.

Spotted dumb cane is so named because vocal cords can be temporarily paralyzed if the leaves are ingested.

Propagation is by cuttings, cane sections, or air-layering.

Dieffenbachia can be affected by mites, mealy-bugs, scale, and nematodes.

### **Pests and Diseases**

Giant dumb cane is susceptible to bacterial stem rot.