**Introduction**

The new growth of spotted dumb cane is cream-white or bright green and finely splotched 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

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** spiral
**Leaf type:** simple
**Leaf margin:** entire

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1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-176, 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.
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Dieffenbachia maculata ‘Rudolf Roehrs’ -- Spotted Dumbcane

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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

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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.