



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## ***Dracaena marginata***<sup>1</sup>

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### **Introduction**

Multiple thin, curving stalks with narrow ribbonlike, green leaves edged in purplish-red distinguish this *Dracaena* from its multitude of cousins (Fig. 1). The upright, unbranched stems form a delicate, somewhat abstract silhouette, perfect for accent planting or for low-maintenance container culture as a house plant or outdoors. It is a fine specimen to silhouette against a wall at night with uplighting.

### **General Information**

**Scientific name:** *Dracaena marginata*

**Pronunciation:** druh-SEE-nuh mar-jin-NAY-tuh

**Common name(s):** Red-Edged Dracaena, Madagascar Dragon-Tree

**Family:** *Agavaceae*

**Plant type:** shrub

**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; border; suitable for growing indoors; accent

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

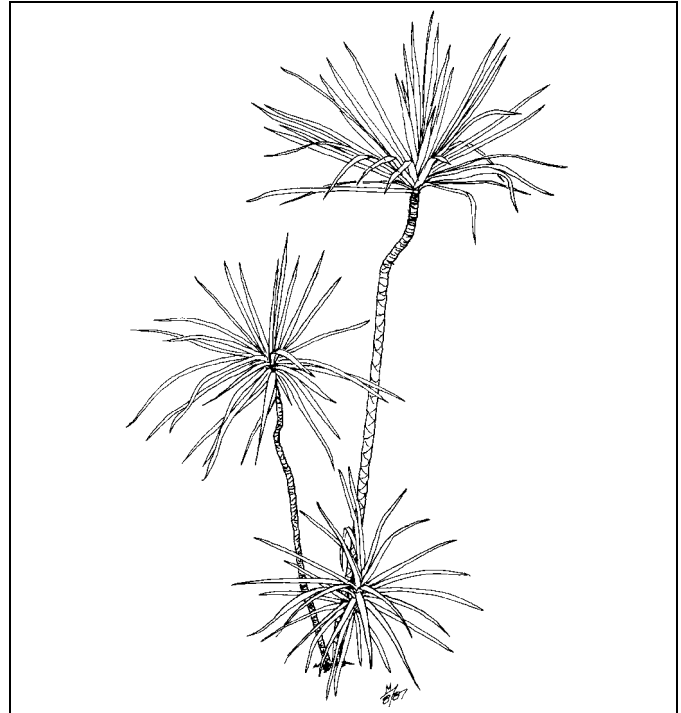
### **Description**

**Height:** 8 to 15 feet

**Spread:** 3 to 8 feet

**Plant habit:** upright

**Plant density:** open



**Figure 1.** Red-Edged Dracaena.

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** fine

#### **Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** spiral

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Leaf shape:** linear  
**Leaf venation:** parallel  
**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen  
**Leaf blade length:** 18 to 36 inches  
**Leaf color:** variegated; purple or red  
**Fall color:** no fall color change  
**Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

**Flower color:** white  
**Flower characteristic:** summer flowering

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** round  
**Fruit length:** less than .5 inch  
**Fruit cover:** fleshy  
**Fruit color:** unknown  
**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

**Current year stem/twig color:** reddish  
**Current year stem/twig thickness:** very thick

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun  
**Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; acidic; slightly alkaline; loam  
**Drought tolerance:** high  
**Soil salt tolerances:** poor  
**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 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

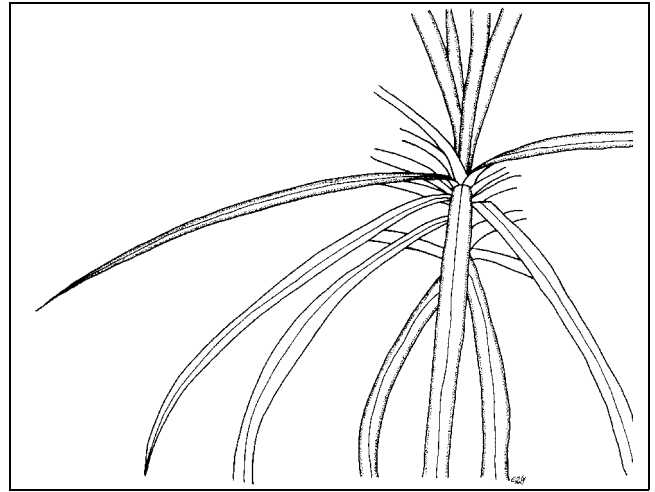
Dracaena grows in shade or sun and is tolerant of drought and a wide variety of soil types, though preferring an organic soil with plenty of moisture. Two or more branches form after pruning a stem. This technique can be used to increase the density of the plant. This can be beneficial since lower leaves drop from the stems as the plant grows taller leaving the bottom of the plant bare.

Propagation is by tip cuttings. The foliage of the cultivar 'Tricolor' is more colorful than the species, appearing almost white from as distance.

Mites, thrips, and chewing insects are a problem.

### Pests and Diseases

Dracaenas are susceptible to leaf spot diseases.



**Figure 3.** Foliage of Red-Edged Dracaena