



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## *Musa rosa*<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

*Musa rosa* is a tall, herbaceous perennial that reaches a height of about 4 feet. This ornamental, stoloniferous plant has large evergreen leaves that can grow to a length of about 3 feet, much smaller than the banana common in many Florida gardens. These leaves are pale green with dark green variegation, and they impart a coarse texture. The hanging orange and yellow flowers of this plant are borne terminally under protective bracts. They are covered by pinkish-red bracts and appear in the summer. Fruits hang in clusters and are quite edible.

### General Information

**Scientific name:** *Musa rosa*

**Pronunciation:** MEW-suh ROE-zuh

**Common name(s):** Banana

**Family:** *Musaceae*

**Plant type:** shrub

**USDA hardiness zones:** 9B through 11 (Fig. 1)

**Planting month for zone 9:** year round

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** specimen; accent

**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

### Description

**Height:** 2 to 4 feet

**Spread:** 4 to 6 feet

**Plant habit:** palm

**Plant density:** open

**Growth rate:** fast

**Texture:** coarse

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** spiral

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

**Leaf shape:** oblong

**Leaf venation:** pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** more than 36 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

### Flower

**Flower color:** orange; yellow

**Flower characteristic:** summer flowering

### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** elongated

**Fruit length:** 6 to 12 inches

**Fruit cover:** fleshy

**Fruit color:** red; yellow

**Fruit characteristic:** suited for human consumption; persists on the plant

### Trunk and Branches

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Figure 1. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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

**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; acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay

**Drought tolerance:**

**Soil salt tolerances:** poor

**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

## Other

**Roots:** sprouts from roots or lower trunk

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** aggressive, spreading plant

**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

## Use and Management

Musa rosa imparts a tropical effect in any garden or landscape. It makes a charming specimen plant that can be planted among shrubs or by itself as a specimen in a small, protected garden. They will be frozen to the ground in central Florida during the winter months. Since the growing point remains at or slightly below the ground, plants grow back if winter temperatures remain above 20 degrees.

This plant needs to be installed in an area of the landscape that receives full sun to partial shade. It prefers moist, fertile soils, but adapts to about anything. It grows well in wet sites.

Musa rosa is commonly propagated by division of the matted clumps.

## Pests and Diseases

Diseases of Musa include Cercospora leaf spot, Panama disease, scales, and nematodes.

