Introduction

Spanish Bayonet makes a dramatic landscape statement, its dark green, stiff, dagger-like leaves projecting from thick, inclining trunks (Fig. 1). Spikes of bright white blossoms appear in springtime to late summer depending on the year in the center of the plant above the foliage. With the sharp needled tips removed with shears, Spanish Bayonet makes a wonderful accent at entryways or in a shrub border. Their striking textures adds an accent to any garden. Plants eventually form attractive, multi-stemmed clumps. High salt tolerance makes Spanish bayonet ideal for seaside plantings.

General Information

Scientific name: *Yucca aloifolia*
Pronunciation: YUCK-kuh al-loe-iff-FOLE-lee-uh
Common name(s): Spanish Bayonet, Aloe Yucca
Family: *Agavaceae*
Plant type: shrub
USDA hardiness zones: 6 through 11 (Fig. 2)
Planting month for zone 7: year round
Planting month for zone 8: year round
Planting month for zone 9: year round
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round
Origin: native to Florida
Uses: specimen; naturalizing; border; accent; attracts butterflies; screen
Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

Height: 10 to 15 feet
Spread: 3 to 5 feet
Plant habit: upright
Plant density: moderate
Growth rate: slow
Texture: coarse

Figure 1. Spanish Bayonet.
**Foliage**

Leaf arrangement: alternate  
Leaf type: simple  
Leaf margin: serrate  
Leaf shape: linear  
Leaf venation: parallel  
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen  
Leaf blade length: 12 to 18 inches  
Leaf color: green  
Fall color: no fall color change  
Fall characteristic: not showy

**Fruit**

Fruit shape: oval  
Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches  
Fruit cover: dry or hard  
Fruit color: brown  
Fruit characteristic: suited for human consumption

**Trunk and Branches**

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems; can be trained to grow with a short, single trunk; not particularly showy  
Current year stem/twig color: green  
Current year stem/twig thickness: very thick

**Culture**

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun  
Soil tolerances: alkaline; sand; acidic; loam  
Drought tolerance: high  
Soil salt tolerances: good  
Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches
Other

**Roots:** sprouts from roots or lower trunk
**Winter interest:** no special winter interest
**Outstanding plant:** plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more
**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive
**Pest resistance:** no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

**Use and Management**

Spanish Dagger is often confused with Spanish Bayonet. Leaf margins on Spanish Dagger (Yucca gloriosa) are smooth, whereas those on Yucca aloifolia (Spanish Bayonet) are rough. The outer half of the leaves on Spanish Dagger also bend toward the ground, whereas those on Spanish Bayonet do not.

Growing in full sun or partial shade, Spanish Bayonet does well on any well-drained soil and should be watered sparingly, if at all. Plants can also tolerate nearly full shade.

The cultivar ‘Tricolor’ has green and white leaves.

Propagation is by division of the suckers or by cuttings of any size at any season. Occasionally plants are grown from seed.

Pest problems include scale and Yucca moth larvae which may bore through and weaken the terminal shoot.

**Pests and Diseases**

Leaf spot can be a problem in areas with poor air circulation.