



## ***Zamia floridana*<sup>1</sup>**

Edward F. Gilman<sup>2</sup>

### **Introduction**

This native of Florida is also known erroneously as *Zamia pumila* (Fig. 1). The feather-like, light green, leathery foliage of Coontie emerges from a large underground storage root in the early years before a trunk develops. Providing a tropical landscape effect, Coontie's unique growth habit is ideally suited for use as a specimen or container planting. It looks particularly attractive when plants of differing sizes are planted together to form a clumping, specimen-like effect. Planted on 3 to 5-foot-centers for a massing effect, it forms a 3-foot-tall, medium-green ground cover. Coontie are rarely used in this manner because of the high cost of plants, but it is well worth the effort. This plant should be used more in the landscape.

### **General Information**

**Scientific name:** *Zamia floridana*

**Pronunciation:** ZAY-mee-uh flor-rid-DAY-nuh

**Common name(s):** Coontie

**Family:** Zamiaceae

**Plant type:** shrub

**USDA hardiness zones:** 8B through 11 (Fig. 2)

**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:** border; mass planting; accent; attracts butterflies; suitable for growing indoors

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

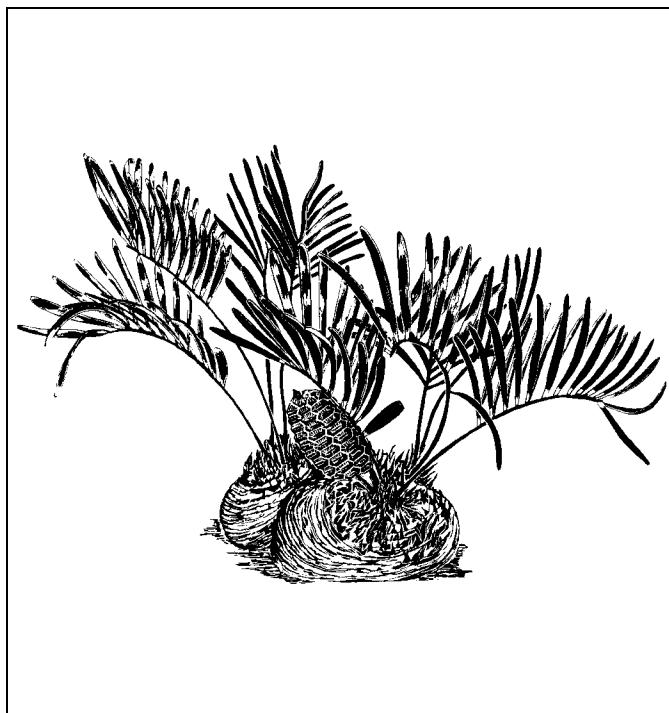


Figure 1. Coontie.

### **Description**

**Height:** 2 to 4 feet

**Spread:** 3 to 5 feet

**Plant habit:** round

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** fine

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-617, 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>.
2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.



**Figure 2.** Shaded area represents potential planting range.

#### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** spiral  
**Leaf type:** even-pinnately compound  
**Leaf margin:** revolute; serrate  
**Leaf shape:** linear  
**Leaf venation:** parallel  
**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen  
**Leaf blade length:** 4 to 8 inches  
**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** no fall color change  
**Fall characteristic:** not showy

#### Flower

**Flower color:** no flowers  
**Flower characteristic:** no flowers

#### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** elongated  
**Fruit length:** 3 to 6 inches  
**Fruit cover:** dry or hard  
**Fruit color:** red

**Fruit characteristic:** showy

#### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not particularly showy; usually with one stem/trunk  
**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:** alkaline; sand; acidic; loam  
**Drought tolerance:** high  
**Soil salt tolerances:** good  
**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

## Other

**Roots:** usually not a problem

**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

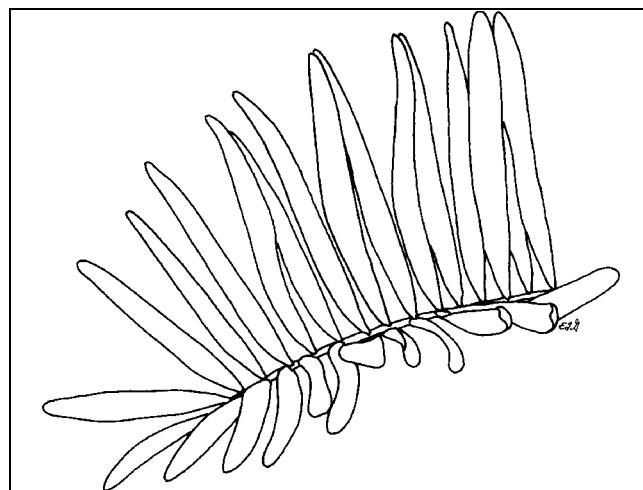
Growing best with some shade, Coontie can tolerate full sun and grows on a variety of soils as long as it is well-drained. Watering should be done with moderation, if at all, once established. But like any plant, plenty of water is needed following transplanting.

Propagation is usually difficult by seed, and growth is very slow.

Pest problems include sooty mold, mealy bugs, and scale. Florida red scale must be controlled by regular spraying as it can be fatal to coontie. The alata caterpillar feeds only on the Coontie. It devours foliage at a rapid rate for about two weeks and then disappears. Plants look fine after new foliage appears.

## Pests and Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.



**Figure 3.** Foliage of Coontie