



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

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

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

### Introduction

The rigid, woody, medium-green foliage of cardboard plant emerges from a large underground storage root and forms a loose, spreading, symmetrical rosette (Fig. 1). Providing a tropical landscape effect, cardboard plant's mounding growth habit is ideally suited for use in containers or as a specimen. Several can be planted together for a lush, tropical effect. They also create a dramatic effect when mass-planted in a shrub border, eventually reaching to six or eight feet tall. Plant on three to five-foot-centers to create a mass planting.

### General Information

**Scientific name:** *Zamia furfuracea*

**Pronunciation:** ZAY-mee-uh fer-fer-RAY-see-uh

**Common name(s):** Cardboard Plant, Cardboard Cycad

**Family:** *Zamiaceae*

**Plant type:** shrub

**USDA hardiness zones:** 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)

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

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

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** border; mass planting; container or above-ground planter; specimen; suitable for growing indoors; accent

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

### Description

**Height:** 2 to 5 feet

**Spread:** 5 to 8 feet

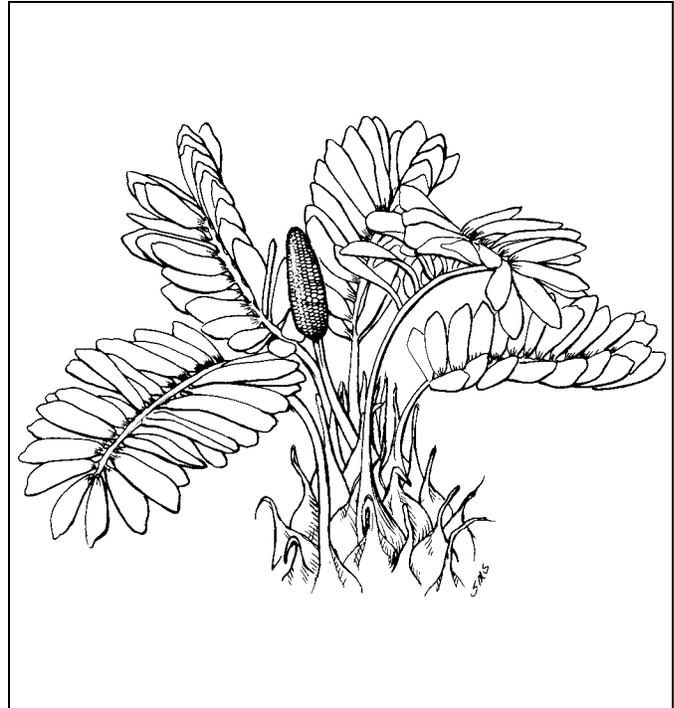


Figure 1. Cardboard Plant.

**Plant habit:** round

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** coarse

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** spiral

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-618, 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.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap, or national origin. For information on obtaining other extension publications, contact your county Cooperative Extension Service office. Florida Cooperative Extension Service / Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences / University of Florida / Christine Taylor Waddill, Dean



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Leaf type:** even-pinnately compound  
**Leaf margin:** serrate  
**Leaf shape:** obovate  
**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; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems  
**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

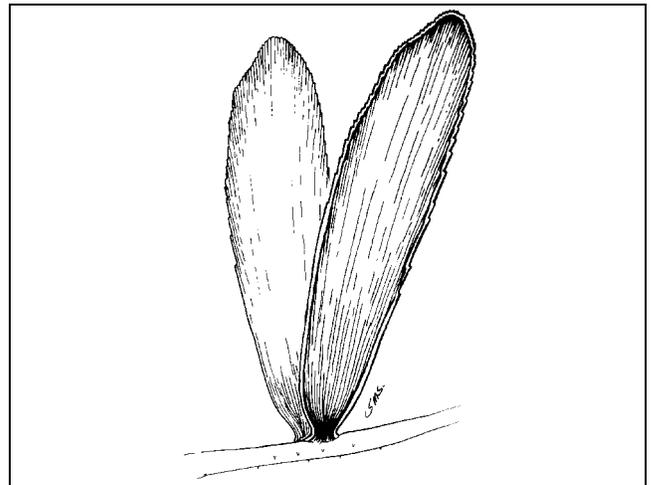
Growing in full sun or shade, cardboard plant tolerates a variety of well-drained soils. Watering should be done with moderation because plants are drought-tolerant once they become established. This plant is under-utilized, probably because of the slow growth rate. But patience is rewarded, as this is one of nature's most attractive plants. It adapts easily to indoors as a house plant.

Propagation is by seed which germinates fairly well several months after being cleaned and planted, or by division.

Florida red scale is the main pest problem and can prove fatal if left unattended.

### Pests and Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.



**Figure 3.** Foliage of Cardboard Plant