Zingiber zerumbet

Edward F. Gilman

Introduction

The multiple stems with lush, ginger-like foliage appear in springtime, eventually forming large clumps and providing a tropical effect in the landscape (Fig. 1). Short, bracted inflorescences, resembling red pine cones, appear from the ground on 10-inch tall stalks in autumn and are much-favored for use in floral arrangements.

General Information

Scientific name: Zingiber zerumbet
Pronunciation: ZIN-jib-ber ZAIR-rum-bet
Common name(s): Pine Cone Lily, Pine Cone Ginger
Family: Zingiberaceae
Plant type: herbaceous
USDA hardiness zones: 9 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: specimen; container or above-ground planter; border; naturalizing; accent
Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

Height: 4 to 7 feet
Spread: 4 to 6 feet
Plant habit: upright; spreading
Plant density: open
Growth rate: moderate

Texture: coarse
Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: lanceolate

Figure 1. Pine Cone Lily.
Zingiber zerumbet -- Pine Cone Lily

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: semi-evergreen
Leaf blade length: 8 to 12 inches
Leaf color: variegated
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower
Flower color: red
Flower characteristic: summer flowering

Fruit
Fruit shape: unknown
Fruit length: unknown
Fruit cover: dry or hard
Fruit color: red
Fruit characteristic: persists on the plant

Trunk and Branches
Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems
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: occasionally wet; slightly alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam
Drought tolerance: moderate
Soil salt tolerances: poor
Plant spacing: 24 to 36 inches

Other
Roots: not applicable
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: long-term health usually not affected by pests
Use and Management

Pine cone lily grows best on fertile, moist soil in full sun or partial shade. Plants are moderately salt-tolerant.

The cultivar ‘Darceyi’ has glistening, green and white foliage.

Plants are propagated by division of the matted clumps.

Mites are the only pest problem of note.

Pests and Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.