

Yucca elephantipes 'Variegata' Variegated Spineless Yucca¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

INTRODUCTION

A dramatic landscape element, Spineless Yucca is the tallest of the Yuccas, reaching 30 feet in height with a 15-foot spread, its single, thick, rough trunk topped with straplike, four-foot-long leaves (Fig. 1). Variegated Spineless Yucca differs from the species only in the variegated, stripped leaf pattern. The trunk can grow to four-foot-thick. Sprouts often grow from the base of the trunk forming a multi-trunked tree. Spineless Yucca grows fairly rapidly but usually stays under 20 feet in height, and is ideal for use in succulent gardens or large planters. Unlike its close relative, Spanish Bayonet, Spineless Yucca can be used in close range of people since it lacks the formidable, terminal spine and has harmless leaves. It was introduced into Florida in 1956 as a substitute for the spiny Spanish Bayonet.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Yucca elephantipes* 'Variegata'

Pronunciation: YUCK-uh ell-uh-fan-TYE-pee-z

Common name(s): Variegated Spineless Yucca, Variegated Soft-Tip Yucca

Family: *Agavaceae*

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

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; suitable for growing indoors; recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

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

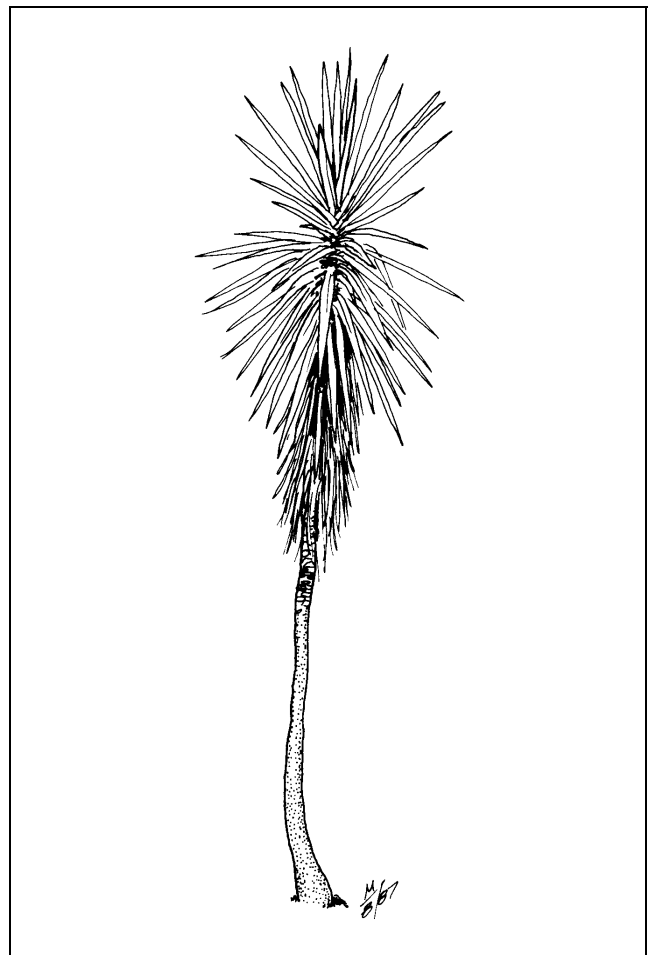


Figure 1. Middle-aged Variegated Spineless Yucca.

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-676, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October 1994.
2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 20 to 30 feet
Spread: 10 to 15 feet
Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette
Crown shape: upright
Crown density: open
Growth rate: fast
Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate; spiral (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: lanceolate; linear
Leaf venation: parallel
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: >36 inches
Leaf color: variegated
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white
Flower characteristics: showy; summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval
Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch
Fruit covering: fleshy
Fruit color: brown
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; grow mostly upright and will not droop; showy trunk; no thorns
Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: green
Current year twig thickness: stout

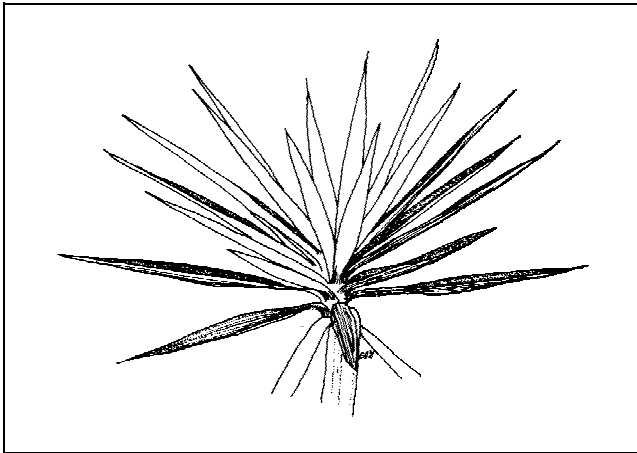


Figure 3. Foliage of Variegated Spineless Yucca.

Pests

Pests include Yucca moth borers, scale, and black weevil which bore into roots and stems.

Diseases

No diseases are of major concern, except root rot in soils kept too moist. Do not irrigate Yucca. Leaf spots sometimes infect Yucca but do no real harm to the plant.

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun;
tree grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline;
well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

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

USE AND MANAGEMENT

The two to three-foot-tall bloom is produced on top of the stalks once the plant is 8 to 10 feet tall. Blooms are edible and high in calcium and potassium and can be used in salads. Leaves contain large amounts of ascorbic acid.

Spineless Yucca grows easily in full sun or partial shade on any well-drained soil. Do not plant Yucca unless drainage is superior. Yucca grows well as a houseplant in a well-lighted area.

Propagation is by cuttings of any size. Suckers at the base of the plant root quite easily.