Monstera deliciosa¹

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Introduction

The beautiful, huge, dark green, deeply-lobed, leathery leaves of Split-Leaf Philodendron almost appear to have been delicately cut with scissors (Fig. 1). These attractive evergreen leaves, up to 36 inches long and wide, are abundantly produced on thickened petioles secured to vigorous vines which quickly climb up any shaded tree trunk, providing the garden with a lush, exotic quality. These vines are capable of reaching 30 feet or more in length but can easily be kept shorter by trimming the terminal new growth. Smaller plants grown in containers on totem poles are quite popular as interior plants.

General Information

Scientific name: Monstera deliciosa

Pronunciation: mawn-STEER-ruh dee-liss-see-OH-suh **Common name(s):** Split-Leaf Philodendron, Swiss Cheese

Plant

Family: Araceae Plant type: vine

USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2) **Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round

Origin: native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; culinary

Availablity: generally available in many areas within its

hardiness range

Description

Height: depends upon supporting structure **Spread:** depends upon supporting structure

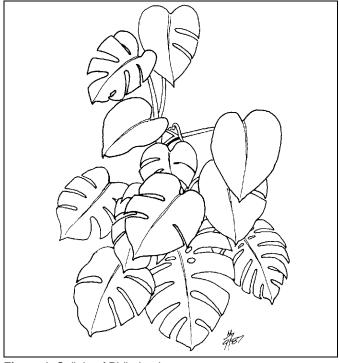


Figure 1. Split-Leaf Philodendron.

Plant habit: spreading Plant density: moderate Growth rate: fast Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

- This document is Fact Sheet FPS-414, 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.
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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: lobed
Leaf shape: ovate
Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen **Leaf blade length:** 18 to 36 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change **Fall characteristic:** not showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristic: showy; pleasant fragrance

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated
Fruit length: 12 inches or more

Fruit cover: fleshy Fruit color: green

Fruit characteristic: suited for human consumption; persists

on the plant

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: usually with one stem/trunk

Current year stem/twig color: green

Current year stem/twig thickness: very thick

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in the shade

Soil tolerances: slightly alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam

Drought tolerance: moderate **Soil salt tolerances:** poor **Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 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

The bloom of Split-Leaf Philodendron is a 12-inch-long, white, calla-like spadix and it is sometimes followed by the unusual, edible fruit which tastes much like a cross of pineapple and banana. The fruit can take a year or longer to ripen, but only under the exacting conditions of proper warmth, high humidity, and bright light typical of USDA hardiness zone 10.

Split-Leaf Philodendron should only be grown in frost-free areas on rich, moist soil in partial to deep shade. Full sun locations can burn the foliage.

Propagation is by cuttings or air-layering, and seldom by seeds.

Scales, mites, and mealy bugs.

Pests and Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.