



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## ***Neoregelia spectabilis***<sup>1</sup>

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### **Introduction**

The olive green leaves of this bromeliad are tipped with red and the inner leaves in the tight rosette tend to be marked with maroon (Fig. 1). The short, inconspicuous, blue flower head appears nestled within this rosette. Forming large clumps due to abundant offsets, Painted Fingernail is well-suited to use as a groundcover in tropical settings. Plant on 18 to 24-inch centers to establish a ground cover. Do not locate plants where children could fall into the plant. The spines on the leaves could cause injury.

### **General Information**

**Scientific name:** *Neoregelia spectabilis*

**Pronunciation:** nee-oh-redge-JEEL-lee-uh speck-TAB-bill-liss

**Common name(s):** Painted Fingernail Plant

**Family:** *Bromeliaceae*

**Plant type:** perennial; herbaceous

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

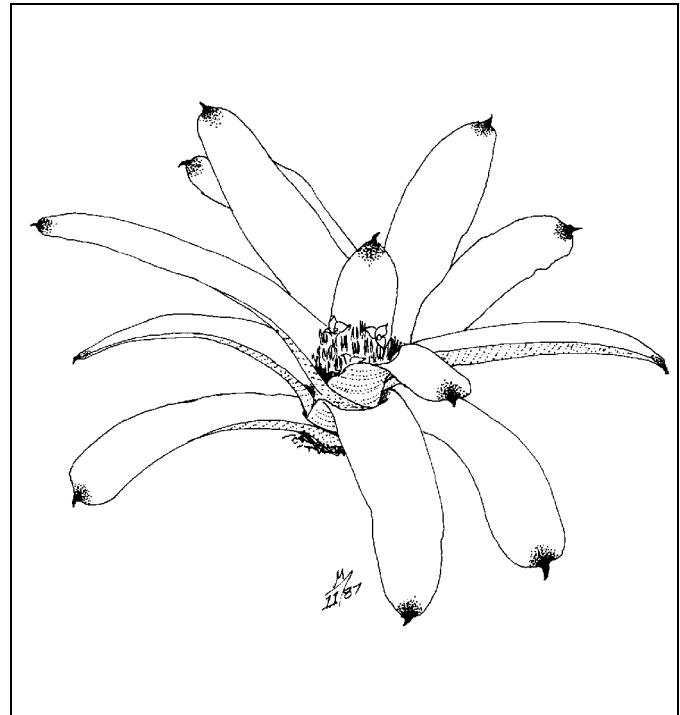
**Planting month for zone 9:** year round

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

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** mass planting; edging

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



**Figure 1.** Painted Fingernail Plant.

**Plant habit:** vase shape

**Plant density:** open

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** coarse

### **Description**

**Height:** 1 to 1.5 feet

**Spread:** 1 to 2 feet

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** most emerge from the soil, usually without a stem

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** spiny

**Leaf shape:** linear

**Leaf venation:** parallel

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** 8 to 12 inches

**Leaf color:** purple or red

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

**Flower color:** blue

**Flower characteristic:** flowers periodically throughout the year

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** round

**Fruit length:** less than .5 inch

**Fruit cover:** fleshy

**Fruit color:** brown

**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not applicable

**Current year stem/twig color:** not applicable

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** not applicable

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun; plant grows in the shade

**Soil tolerances:** alkaline; sand; acidic; loam

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Soil salt tolerances:** unknown

**Plant spacing:** 18 to 24 inches

## Other

**Roots:** not applicable

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

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

## Use and Management

Tolerating full sun to deep shade, the foliage will take on a bronze color when exposed to high light intensities. Moisture-retentive but well-drained, light, airy, coarse soil is best, or plants may be wired to tree branches with sphagnum moss around the roots. No irrigation is normally required to grow bromeliads.

Propagation is by division of the offsets or by seed.

Problems include scale and mites.

### Pests and Diseases

Plants are susceptible to root rots in poorly drained soils.