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-

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

Family: *Agavaceae*

USDA hardness 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.
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.

**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.

**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.