



Yucca elephantipes Spineless Yucca¹

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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). 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*

Pronunciation: YUCK-uh ell-uh-fan-TYE-peeZ

Common name(s): Spineless Yucca, 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: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

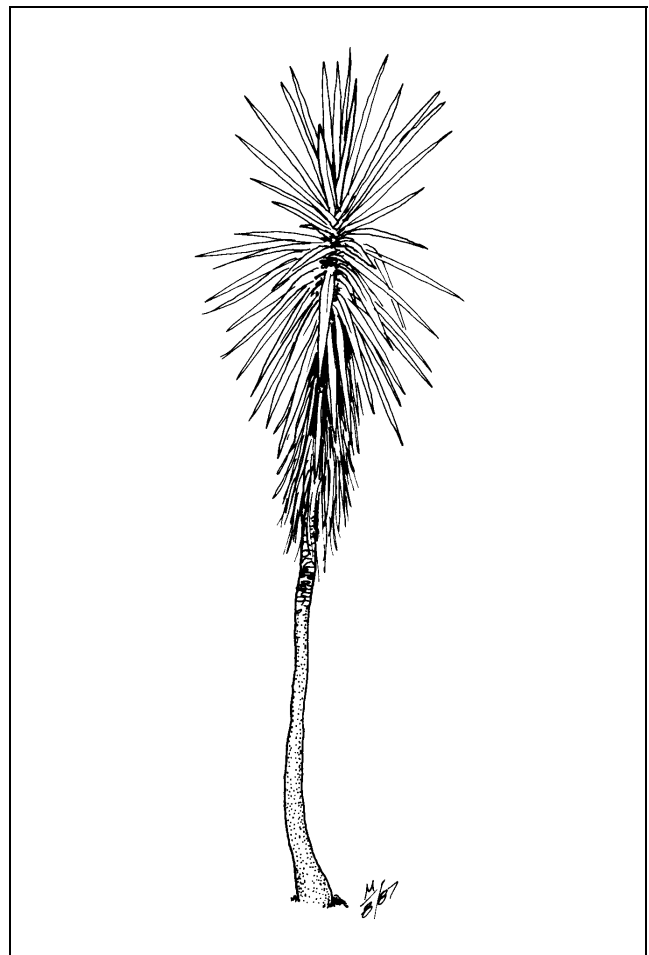


Figure 1. Middle-aged Spineless Yucca.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 20 to 30 feet

Spread: 10 to 15 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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: green

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: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: green

Current year twig thickness: stout

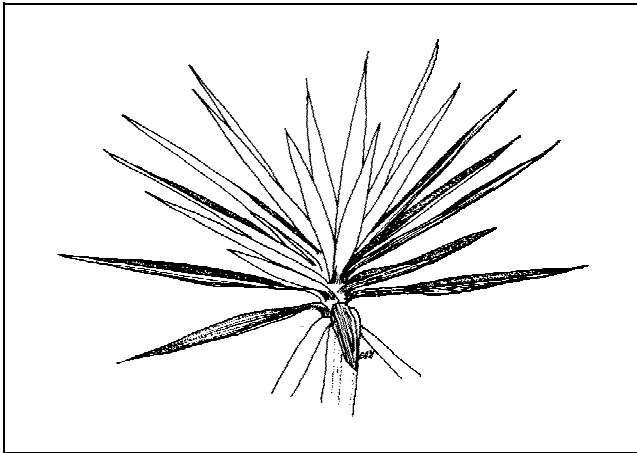


Figure 3. Foliage of Spineless Yucca.

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.

A Spineless Yucca cultivar with striped foliage, 'Variegata', may be found in some nurseries, and may be gaining in popularity.

Propagation is by seed or 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.