

# Calathea makoyana Peacock Plant<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Beautifully marked leaves in various shades of green, cream, white, pink, and silver held aloft on maroon stems make peacock plant an attractive, clump-forming plant for outdoor use or as a house plant (Fig. 1). The undersides of the leaves are dark purple making a striking contrast to the lighter colored tops of the leaves. Flowers are small and inconspicuous to all but the astute observer. The striking foliage gives this plant distinction.



Figure 1. Peacock plant.

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Calathea makoyana*  
**Pronunciation:** kal-luhth-EE-uh mack-oy-AY-nuh  
**Common name(s):** peacock plant  
**Family:** *Marantaceae*  
**Plant type:** herbaceous; perennial  
**USDA hardiness zones:** 10 through 11 (Fig. 2)  
**Planting month for zone 7:** year round  
**Planting month for zone 8:** year round  
**Planting month for zone 9:** year round  
**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round  
**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** specimen; container or above-ground planter; border; ground cover; accent; suitable for growing indoors

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

## Description

**Height:** 2 to 4 feet  
**Spread:** 2 to 4 feet  
**Plant habit:** upright  
**Plant density:** moderate  
**Growth rate:** moderate  
**Texture:** coarse

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** spiral  
**Leaf type:** simple  
**Leaf margin:** entire

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**Leaf shape:** ovate  
**Leaf venation:** pinnate  
**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen  
**Leaf blade length:** 4 to 8 inches  
**Leaf color:** variegated  
**Fall color:** no fall color change  
**Fall characteristic:** not showy

## Flower

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

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** unknown  
**Fruit length:** less than .5 inch  
**Fruit cover:** dry or hard  
**Fruit color:** unknown  
**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

## Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** typically multi-trunked or clumping stems  
**Current year stem/twig color:** green  
**Current year stem/twig thickness:** thick

## Culture

**Light requirement:** plant grows in the shade  
**Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; loam; slightly alkaline; acidic  
**Drought tolerance:**  
**Soil salt tolerances:** poor  
**Plant spacing:** 18 to 24 inches

## Other

**Roots:** sprouts from roots or lower trunk  
**Winter interest:** no special winter interest  
**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding  
**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive  
**Pest resistance:** very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect plant health or aesthetics

## Use and Management

A porous potting media high in organic matter is preferred for best leaf color and growth but avoid constantly wet soil as root-rots are quite damaging. Filtered light is needed as bright light will wash out the brilliant leaf colors. High humidity is vital for growth as a house plant, with daily mistings recommended. Plant on three-foot centers for mass planting outdoors. Peacock plant also works well as

a tall ground cover toward the front of a shrub border. It performs well in a container on a deck or patio in the shade.

Propagation is by cuttings or division.

## Pests and Diseases

Mites can be a serious pest problem, particularly if the plant is in a sunny location.

No diseases are of major concern.