

Crinum x amabile Giant Spider Lily¹

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Introduction

The giant spider lily is a herbaceous perennial that rises from a 3 to 4 1/2-inch thick, fleshy bulb (Fig. 1). The linear, leathery leaves grow in a rosette. These glossy leaves are greenish-red and reach a length of 2 to 4 feet. Red and pink fragrant flowers sit atop a succulent, cylindrical flower stalk that is 1 to 3 feet tall. A 6-inch-long floral tube bears six petals and sepals, and rosy stamens from the throat of this tube. These striking, fragrant flowers appear most abundantly in the spring, summer and fall seasons of the year. The fruits of the giant spider lily are lobed seed capsules that are 1 ½ to 2 inches thick.



Figure 1. Giant spider lily.

General Information

Scientific name: *Crinum x amabile*

Pronunciation: KRYE-num x uh-MAB-ill-lee

Common name(s): giant spider lily

Family: *Amaryllidaceae*

Plant type: bulb/tuber; perennial; herbaceous

USDA hardiness zones: 8B through 11 (Fig. 2)

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: mass planting; specimen; accent

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: 3 to 5 feet

Spread: 3 to 5 feet

Plant habit: spreading

Plant density: open

Growth rate: moderate

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Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: spiral

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: linear

Leaf venation: parallel

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: more than 36 inches

Leaf color: purple or red

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: purple; red

Flower characteristic: year-round flowering; pleasant fragrance

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit cover: dry or hard

Fruit color: green

Fruit characteristic: showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not particularly showy; usually with one stem/trunk

Current year stem/twig color: not applicable

Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun

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

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: usually not a problem

Winter interest: plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

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

Planted in mass, giant spider lily forms an attractive tall ground cover and is lovely when used as an edge or border around a pool of water. It is often planted alone in a small landscape as a specimen to accent an area. Locate it near a walk or patio to enjoy the fragrant flowers.

This lily is best grown in soils that are moderately moist. Irrigation during dry weather, especially in the summer, is recommended. Plant this lily in full sun to partial shade for best growth and flowering. The giant spider lily is moderately tolerant of salt spray and will grow well in coastal communities away from the direct salt spray.

Pests and Diseases

Leaf spot disease appears to be the biggest problem.