

Musa rosa Banana¹

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Introduction

Musa rosa is a tall, herbaceous perennial that reaches a height of about 4 feet. This ornamental, stoloniferous plant has large, evergreen leaves that can grow to a length of about 3 feet, much smaller than the banana common in many Florida gardens. These leaves are pale green with dark green variegation, and they impart a coarse texture. The hanging orange and yellow flowers of this plant are borne terminally under protective bracts. They are covered by pinkish-red bracts and appear in the summer. Fruits hang in clusters and are quite edible.

General Information

Scientific name: *Musa rosa*

Pronunciation: MEW-suh ROE-zuh

Common name(s): banana

Family: *Musaceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Fig. 1)

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: specimen; accent

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

Description

Height: 2 to 4 feet

Spread: 4 to 6 feet

Plant habit: palm

Plant density: open

Growth rate: fast

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: spiral



Figure 1. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: oblong

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: more than 36 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

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Flower

Flower color: orange; yellow

Flower characteristic: summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated

Fruit length: 6 to 12 inches

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: red; yellow

Fruit characteristic: suited for human consumption; persists on the plant

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems; showy

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; acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay

Drought tolerance:

Soil salt tolerances: poor

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: sprouts from roots or lower trunk

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: aggressive, spreading plant

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

Use and Management

Musa rosa imparts a tropical effect in any garden or landscape. It makes a charming specimen plant that can be planted among shrubs or by itself as a specimen in a small, protected garden. They will be frozen to the ground in central Florida during the winter months. Since the growing point remains at or slightly below the ground, plants grow back if winter temperatures remain above 20 degrees.

This plant needs to be installed in an area of the landscape that receives full sun to partial shade. It prefers moist, fertile soils, but adapts to about anything. It grows well in wet sites.

Musa rosa is commonly propagated by division of the matted clumps.

Pests and Diseases

Diseases of *Musa rosa* include cercospora leaf spot, Panama disease, scales, and nematodes.