

Philodendron bipennifolium Horsehead Philodendron¹

Edward F. Gilman²

Introduction

Large, 18-inch-long, shiny, olive green, leathery leaves in the shape of a violin or a horse's head distinguish this vining philodendron (Fig. 1). Whether growing up tree trunks or potted totem poles, fiddleleaf philodendron provides neat, evergreen, glossy foliage with a tropical appeal. The stems are an attractive light brown with long tendrils.

General Information

Scientific name: *Philodendron bipennifolium*

Pronunciation: fill-loe-DEN-drun

bi-pen-niff-FOLE-lee-um

Common name(s): horsehead philodendron, fiddleleaf philodendron

Family: *Araceae*

Plant type: herbaceous

USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: suitable for growing indoors; cascading down a wall; hanging basket

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: depends upon supporting structure

Spread: depends upon supporting structure

Plant habit: spreading

Plant density: open

Growth rate: moderate



Figure 1. Horsehead philodendron

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: undulate

Leaf shape: deltoid

Leaf venation: palmate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

1. This document is FPS470, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date September 1999. Revised June 2007. Reviewed June 2011. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf blade length: 12 to 18 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: green

Flower characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: less than .5 inch

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: unknown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable

Current year stem/twig color: gray/silver

Current year stem/twig thickness: very thick

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in the shade

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; acidic; loam

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: poor

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: aggressive, spreading plant

Pest resistance: very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect plant health or aesthetics

Use and Management

Growing well in bright light or deep shade, fiddleleaf philodendron needs well-drained soil to avoid root rot. The plant is slightly salt tolerant.

Propagation is by cuttings or layering.

Mites, scale, thrips, and mealy bugs are all known to bother fiddleleaf philodendron.

Pests and Diseases

Bacterial soft rot and several leaf spotting diseases can cause problems for fiddleleaf philodendron.