

# *Yucca aloifolia* Spanish Bayonet<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Spanish bayonet makes a dramatic landscape statement, its dark green, stiff, dagger-like leaves projecting from thick, inclining trunks (Fig. 1). Spikes of bright white blossoms appear in the center of the plant above the foliage in springtime to late summer depending on the year. With the sharp-needed tips removed with shears, Spanish bayonet makes a wonderful accent at entryways or in a shrub border. Their striking texture adds an accent to any garden. Plants eventually form attractive, multi-stemmed clumps. High salt tolerance makes Spanish bayonet ideal for seaside plantings.

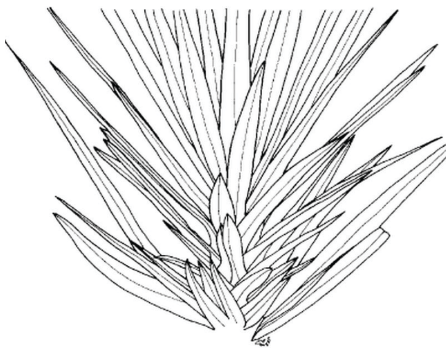


Figure 1. Spanish bayonet

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Yucca aloifolia*

**Pronunciation:** YUCK-kuh al-loe-iff-FOLE-lee-uh

**Common name(s):** Spanish bayonet, aloe yucca

**Family:** *Agavaceae*

**Plant type:** shrub

**USDA hardiness zones:** 6 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:** native to Florida

**Uses:** specimen; naturalizing; border; accent; attracts butterflies; screen

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



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

## Description

**Height:** 10 to 15 feet

**Spread:** 3 to 5 feet

**Plant habit:** upright

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** coarse

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## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** serrate

**Leaf shape:** linear

**Leaf venation:** parallel

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** 12 to 18 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

## Flower

**Flower color:** white

**Flower characteristic:** summer flowering; spring flowering; pleasant fragrance

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** oval

**Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches

**Fruit cover:** dry or hard

**Fruit color:** brown

**Fruit characteristic:** suited for human consumption

## Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** typically multi-trunked or clumping stems; can be trained to grow with a short, single trunk; not particularly showy

**Current year stem/twig color:** green

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** very thick

## Culture

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun

**Soil tolerances:** alkaline; sand; acidic; loam

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Soil salt tolerances:** good

**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

## Other

**Roots:** sprouts from roots or lower trunk

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding plant:** plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

**Pest resistance:** no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

## Use and Management

Spanish bayonet is often confused with Spanish dagger. Leaf margins on Spanish dagger (*Yucca gloriosa*) are smooth, whereas those on *Yucca aloifolia* (Spanish bayonet) are rough. The outer halves of the leaves on Spanish dagger also bend toward the ground, whereas those on Spanish bayonet do not.

Growing in full sun or partial shade, Spanish bayonet does well on any well-drained soil and should be watered sparingly, if at all. Plants can also tolerate nearly full shade.

The cultivar 'Tricolor' has green and white leaves.

Propagation is by division of the suckers or by cuttings of any size at any season. Occasionally plants are grown from seed.

## Pests and Diseases

Pest problems include scale and yucca moth larvae, which may bore through and weaken the terminal shoot.

Leaf spot can be a problem in areas with poor air circulation.