

Zamia furfuracea Cardboard Plant, Cardboard Cycad¹

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Introduction

The rigid, woody, medium-green foliage of cardboard plant emerges from a large underground storage root and forms a loose, spreading, symmetrical rosette (Fig. 1). Providing a tropical landscape effect, cardboard plant's mounding growth habit is ideally suited for use in containers or as a specimen. Several can be planted together for a lush, tropical effect. They also create a dramatic effect when mass-planted in a shrub border, eventually reaching to six or eight feet tall. Plant on three- to five-foot centers to create a mass planting.



Figure 1. Cardboard plant

General Information

Scientific name: *Zamia furfuracea*

Pronunciation: ZAY-mee-uh fer-fer-RAY-see-uh

Common name(s): cardboard plant, cardboard cycad

Family: *Zamiaceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

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

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



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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Description

Height: 2 to 5 feet
Spread: 5 to 8 feet
Plant habit: round
Plant density: moderate
Growth rate: slow
Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: spiral
Leaf type: even-pinnately compound
Leaf margin: serrate
Leaf shape: obovate
Leaf venation: parallel
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

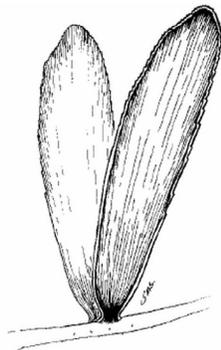


Figure 3. Foliage of cardboard plant

Flower

Flower color: no flowers
Flower characteristic: no flowers

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated
Fruit length: 3 to 6 inches
Fruit cover: dry or hard
Fruit color: red
Fruit characteristic: showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not particularly showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems
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: alkaline; sand; acidic; loam
Drought tolerance: high
Soil salt tolerances: good
Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: usually not a problem
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

Growing in full sun or shade, cardboard plant tolerates a variety of well-drained soils. Watering should be done with moderation because plants are drought-tolerant once they become established. This plant is under-utilized, probably because of the slow growth rate. But patience is rewarded because this is one of nature's most attractive plants. It adapts easily to indoors as a house plant.

Propagation is by seed, which germinates fairly well several months after being cleaned and planted, or by division.

Pests and Diseases

Florida red scale is the main pest problem and can prove fatal if left unattended.

No diseases are of major concern.