**Aechmea blanchetiana: Bromeliad**

Edward F. Gilman, Ryan W. Klein, and Gail Hansen

---

**Introduction**

The attractive orange foliage with red tips of this easy-care bromeliad is a perfect background for the brilliant, spring-time flower stalk, which emerges from the tight center rosette of leaves. The flower stalk is composed of a cluster of red and yellow showy bracts. It is the long-lasting bracts that are most noticeable. They can be used as cut flowers indoors for a period of weeks.

---

**General Information**

**Scientific name:** Aechmea blanchetiana  
**Pronunciation:** eek-MEE-uh blan-ket-ee-AY-nuh  
**Common name(s):** bromeliad  
**Family:** Bromeliaceae

---

**Plant type:** perennial; herbaceous  
**USDA hardiness zones:** 10B through 11 (Figure 2)  
**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round  
**Origin:** not native to North America  
**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive  
**Uses:** mass planting; container or above-ground planter; ground cover; suitable for growing indoors  
**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

---

**Description**

**Height:** 2 to 4 feet  
**Spread:** 1 to 2 feet  
**Plant habit:** vase shape  
**Plant density:** open  
**Growth rate:** slow  
**Texture:** coarse

---

1. This document is FPS14, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date October 1999. Revised November 2017. Visit the EDIS website at [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu).

2. Edward F. Gilman, professor; Ryan W. Klein, graduate assistant; and Gail Hansen, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. For more information on obtaining other UF/IFAS Extension publications, contact your county’s UF/IFAS Extension office.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, UF/IFAS Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A & M University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating. Nick T. Place, dean for UF/IFAS Extension.
**Foliage**
- Leaf arrangement: basal rosette
- Leaf type: simple
- Leaf margin: spiny
- Leaf shape: elliptic (oval)
- Leaf venation: parallel
- Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
- Leaf blade length: 18 to 36 inches
- Leaf color: orange
- Fall color: no fall color change
- Fall characteristic: not showy

**Flower**
- Flower color: pink; salmon
- Flower characteristic: spring flowering

**Fruit**
- Fruit shape: no fruit
- Fruit length: no fruit
- Fruit cover: no fruit
- Fruit color: not applicable
- Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**
- Trunk/bark/branches: 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: slightly alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam
- Drought tolerance: high
- Soil salt tolerance: poor
- Plant spacing: 18 to 24 inches

**Other**
- Roots: not applicable
- Winter interest: no special winter interest
- Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding
- Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
- Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

**Use and Management**
Growing best in partial shade in moisture-retentive but well-drained soil, this bromeliad makes a handsome ground cover or container plant. Place individual plants about 18 to 24 inches apart for an effective ground cover. A ground cover or mass planting in front of a green-foliaged shrub grouping that branches to the ground makes a nice, bright accent for a partially shaded spot. It can also be successfully grown epiphyttically, or without soil, with moss around its roots. Wire it to the branches of rough-barked trees where its cupped rosette will catch needed water.

Propagation is by division of the offsets or by seed.

**Design Considerations**
The bold form and coarse texture of the bromeliad make it perfect for containers and highly visible spaces in the landscape. Use with plants that are softer with small foliage and mounding or spreading forms. Medium and dark green foliage will highlight the orange and red of the bromeliad. Pair with plants that have more texture in the foliage to contrast with the smooth leaves of the bromeliad. Use plants with no flowers or small to medium flowers with cool bright colors to contrast with the bright red and orange. Complementary colors include cool colors such as purples and blues. Use large masses of companion plants around the base or in front of the bromeliads when they are planted in a mass.

**Pests and Diseases**
Root rot is a problem if the soil is kept too moist. No irrigation is needed to maintain the plants once they are established.

Other problems include scale and mosquitoes, which may breed in the trapped water in the leaves.