Dracaena marginata Red-edged Dracaena, Madagascar Dragon Tree

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Introduction
Multiple thin, curving stalks with narrow ribbon-like, green leaves edged in purplish-red distinguish this dracaena from its multitude of cousins (Fig. 1). The upright, unbranched stems form a delicate, somewhat abstract silhouette, perfect for accent planting or for low-maintenance container culture as a houseplant or outdoors. It is a fine specimen to silhouette against a wall at night with uplighting.

General Information
Scientific name: Dracaena marginata
Pronunciation: druh-SEE-nuh mar-jin-NAY-tuh
Common name(s): red-edged dracaena, Madagascar dragon tree
Family: Agavaceae

Plant type: shrub
USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: container or above-ground planter; border; suitable for growing indoors; accent
Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description
Height: 8 to 15 feet
Spread: 3 to 8 feet
Plant habit: upright
Plant density: open
Growth rate: slow

Figure 1. Red-edged dracaena.

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.
**Foliage**

- **Leaf arrangement:** spiral
- **Leaf type:** simple
- **Leaf margin:** entire
- **Leaf shape:** linear
- **Leaf venation:** parallel
- **Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen
- **Leaf blade length:** 18 to 36 inches
- **Leaf color:** variegated; purple or red
- **Fall color:** no fall color change
- **Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

- **Flower color:** white
- **Flower characteristic:** summer flowering

**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:** showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems
- **Current year stem/twig color:** reddish
- **Current year stem/twig thickness:** very thick

**Culture**

- **Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun
- **Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; acidic; slightly alkaline; loam
- **Drought tolerance:** high
- **Soil salt tolerances:** poor
- **Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

**Other**

- **Roots:** usually not a problem

**Use and Management**

Dracaena grows in shade or sun and is tolerant of drought and a wide variety of soil types, though preferring an organic soil with plenty of moisture. Two or more branches form after pruning a stem. This technique can be used to increase the density of the plant. This can be beneficial since lower leaves drop from the stems as the plant grows taller leaving the bottom of the plant bare.

Propagation is by tip cuttings. The foliage of the cultivar ‘Tricolor’ is more colorful than the species, appearing almost white from as distance.

**Pests and Diseases**

Mites, thrips, and chewing insects are a problem.

Dracaenas are susceptible to leaf spot diseases.