Epipremnum aureum Golden Pothos

Edward F. Gilman

Introduction
The green and yellow heart-shaped leaves of Golden Pothos are easily recognized from its use as hanging baskets indoors, but this plant makes a suitable groundcover or climbing vine in frost-free climates (Fig. 1). Growing quickly up the trunks of pine, palm, oak, or other coarse-barked trees, the normally small leaves change to a mature form averaging 18 inches in length, lending a tropical effect to the landscape. The leaves sometimes become so large that they may cause the vine to lose its tendril-hold on the trunk, especially after heavy rain storms. When not allowed to climb, Golden Pothos rapidly covers the ground with a dense cover of its variegated foliage.

General Information
Scientific name: Epipremnum aureum
Pronunciation: epp-pip-PREM-num AR-ee-um
Common name(s): Golden Pothos, Pothos
Family: Araceae
Plant type: ground cover
USDA hardiness zones: 10 through 11 (Fig. 2)
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: ground cover; container or above-ground planter; naturalizing; suitable for growing indoors; cut foliage/twigs; hanging basket; cascading down a wall
Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Figure 1. Golden Pothos.

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.
Description
Height: depends upon supporting structure
Spread: depends upon supporting structure
Plant habit: prostrate (flat); spreading
Plant density: moderate
Growth rate: fast
Texture: medium

Foliage
Leaf arrangement: alternate
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: ovate
Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches; 8 to 12 inches; 12 to 18 inches; 18 to 36 inches
Leaf color: variegated
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower
Flower color: white
Flower characteristic: year-round flowering

Fruit
Fruit shape: unknown
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: green
Current year stem/twig thickness: very thick

Culture
Light requirement: plant grows in the shade
Soil tolerances: slightly alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; occasionally wet; loam
Drought tolerance: high
Soil salt tolerances: poor
Plant spacing: 24 to 36 inches

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

Use and Management
Golden Pothos displays best leaf color when grown in bright diffuse light, such as in the shifting shade of a pine tree, but the plants seem to grow quickest in deeper shade. Moist, rich soil is recommended, although any well-drained soil is sufficient as long as plants are regularly watered during dry periods. The vining habit makes it unsuitable for planting in and around a shrub border since stems will grow up into the shrub. Frequent trimming (several times each year) is required along the edges of this groundcover to control growth.

Popular cultivars include: ‘Marble Queen’, white to creamy leaves, blotched with green and grey-green; ‘Tricolor’, green leaves marbled with deep yellow, cream, and pale green; and ‘Wilcoxii’, with sharply-defined variegations of green and white.

Golden Pothos is easily propagated by tip cuttings, rooting and growing quickly, even in water. Stem cuttings can also be rooted in moist peat and vermiculite or soil.

Pests and Diseases
Problems include scale, mites, and mealy-bugs.

No diseases are of major concern.