**Hymenocallis latifolia** Spider Lily

Edward F. Gilman

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**Introduction**

*Hymenocallis latifolia* is a Florida native that is popular for its exceptional foliage and snow-white flowers (Fig. 1). This clumping, herbaceous perennial reaches a height of 2 to 3 feet. It has 3-foot-long, dark green, linear leaves that grow directly from an underground bulb. Numerous, white flowers appear above these attractive leaves in the summer and fall. The fragrant, long lasting flowers have a 6-inch-long flower tube with narrow, long, recurving sepals and petals. The upright filaments of these delicate flowers are connected by a gossamer web. Large, ovoid capsules that produce viable seeds appear on this plant after flowering has ceased.

**General Information**

Scientific name: *Hymenocallis latifolia*  
Pronunciation: hye-men-oh-KAL-liss lat-tif-FOLE-ee-uh  
Common name(s): Spider-Lily  
Family: Amaryllidaceae  
Plant type: bulb/tuber; herbaceous  
USDA hardiness zones: 10 through 11 (Fig. 2)  
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round  
Origin: native to Florida  
Uses: mass planting; border; accent; edging  
Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

**Description**

Height: 1 to 3 feet  
Spread: 3 to 5 feet  
Plant habit: upright

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**Plant density:** moderate  
**Growth rate:** fast  
**Texture:** coarse

### Foliage
- **Leaf arrangement:** basal rosette  
- **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:** green  
- **Fall color:** no fall color change  
- **Fall characteristic:** not showy

### Flower
- **Flower color:** white  
- **Flower characteristic:** pleasant fragrance; summer flowering

### Fruit
- **Fruit shape:** oval  
- **Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches  
- **Fruit cover:** dry or hard  
- **Fruit color:** unknown  
- **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:** well-drained; alkaline; sand; loam; clay  
**Drought tolerance:** high  
**Soil salt tolerances:** poor  
**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 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
This fast growing plant creates a wonderful, tall ground cover that readily reseeds itself. A solid ground cover can form within 2 years after planting on 3- to 5-feet centers. It is also nicely suited for planting as a specimen in a small garden. Flowers and foliage both attract attention. This makes a nice addition to any landscape.

Plant in full sun or partial shade on well-drained, basic, sandy loam soils. The Spider Lily is very tolerant of drought and salt spray but will not endure cold temperatures. It is great for south Florida and will do well in coastal landscapes.

The Spider Lily is generally propagated by bulb divisions.

### Pests and Diseases
No pests or diseases are of major concern.