Philodendron bipennifolium Horsehead Philodendron

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Introduction

Large, 18-inch-long, shiny, olive green, leathery leaves in the shape of a violin or a horse's head distinguish this vining philodendron (Fig. 1). Whether growing up tree trunks or potted totem poles, fiddleleaf philodendron provides neat, evergreen, glossy foliage with a tropical appeal. The stems are an attractive light brown with long tendrils.

Figure 1. Horsehead philodendron

General Information

Scientific name: Philodendron bipennifolium
Pronunciation: fill-loe-DEN-drun
bi-pen-niff-FOLE-lee-um
Common name(s): horsehead philodendron, fiddleleaf philodendron
Family: Araceae
Plant type: herbaceous
USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: suitable for growing indoors; cascading down a wall; hanging basket
Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: depends upon supporting structure
Spread: depends upon supporting structure
Plant habit: spreading
Plant density: open
Growth rate: moderate
Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: undulate
Leaf shape: deltoid
Leaf venation: palmate
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: 12 to 18 inches

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.
Leaf color: green  
Fall color: no fall color change  
Fall characteristic: not showy

**Flower**  
Flower color: green  
Flower characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

**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: not applicable  
Current year stem/twig color: gray/silver  
Current year stem/twig thickness: very thick

**Culture**  
Light requirement: plant grows in the shade  
Soil tolerances: clay; sand; acidic; loam  
Drought tolerance: moderate  
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: aggressive, spreading plant  
Pest resistance: very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect plant health or aesthetics

**Use and Management**  
Growing well in bright light or deep shade, fiddleleaf philodendron needs well-drained soil to avoid root rot. The plant is slightly salt tolerant.

Propagation is by cuttings or layering.

**Pests and Diseases**  
Mites, scale, thrips, and mealy bugs are all known to bother fiddleleaf philodendron.

Bacterial soft rot and several leaf spotting diseases can cause problems for fiddleleaf philodendron.