

Crassula argentea Jade Plant¹

Edward F. Gilman²

Introduction

Jade plants have long been used in containers where they will live for years in root-bound conditions but can also be used as specimen or hedge plantings outdoors in full sun, part sun, or deep shade (Fig. 1). While growth is very slow, jade plants are extremely tolerant of poor, dry soil, the thick, succulent leaves, and stout branches acting as water-reservoirs. This characteristic makes them very suitable for houseplants. Install several plants in a container to develop a full plant quickly.

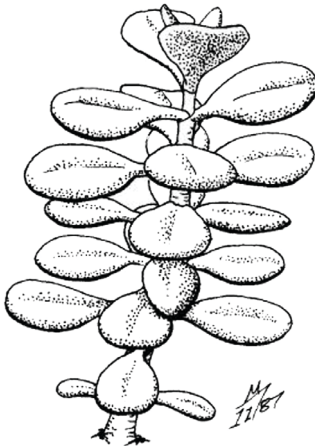


Figure 1. Jade plant.

General Information

Scientific name: *Crassula argentea*

Pronunciation: KRASS-yoo-luh ar-JEN-tee-uh

Common name(s): jade plant

Family: *Crassulaceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 10 through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: border; accent

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: 2 to 4 feet

Spread: 1 to 3 feet

Plant habit: round

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: slow

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

1. This document is FPS153, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date October 1999. Reviewed February 2014. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

2. Edward F. Gilman, 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.

Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: obovate
Leaf venation: none, or difficult to see
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: variegated
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white
Flower characteristic: spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown
Fruit length: less than .5 inch
Fruit cover: unknown
Fruit color: red; purple
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems
Current year stem/twig color: brown
Current year stem/twig thickness: very thick

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun; plant grows in the shade
Soil tolerances: sand; acidic; slightly alkaline; loam
Drought tolerance: high
Soil salt tolerances: unknown
Plant spacing: 24 to 36 inches

Other

Roots: usually not a problem
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Jade plant may grow for many years without blooming. When flowers do appear, they form in small, white or pink clusters at the tips of branches. Blooms are uncommon in the areas of the country with high humidity, such as Florida.

Fast-draining soil is a necessity with jade plant to help avoid root-rot, with waterings being infrequent and only when the soil is very dry. In Florida, too much rain and irrigation prevents this plant from use as a landscape plant in all but the driest soil. It has been used as an outdoor specimen or houseplant in the warm areas of California. Trunks to six inches in diameter can develop on older plants.

There is a cultivar with variegated leaves which is commonly used as a house plant.

Propagation is by cuttings.

Pests and Diseases

Jade plants can be bothered by scale, but their major problem is usually overwatering.

No diseases are of major concern.