

Philodendron scandens Heart Leaf Philodendron¹

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Introduction

Heart leaf philodendron is probably most often seen as a houseplant, its two- to three-inch-wide, solid green, heart shaped leaves and long, thin stems trailing out of a hanging basket (Fig. 1). Although well-suited to indoor use due to its ease of growth and very high tolerance of low light conditions, when allowed to grow outside heart leaf philodendron takes on a whole new appearance. Grown as a ground cover, it quickly covers a shady area with its lush, dark green growth. As the strong stems climb up a tree trunk or other vertical support, the leaves become larger, eventually reaching 12 inches or more in length. If desired, it may also be grown in a container or on a totem pole or other moisture-retentive support column.



Figure 1. Heart leaf philodendron

General Information

Scientific name: *Philodendron scandens*

Pronunciation: fill-loe-DEN-drun SCAN-denz

Common name(s): heart leaf 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; hanging basket; cascading down a wall

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: depends upon supporting structure

Spread: depends upon supporting structure

Plant habit: spreading

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

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Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: cordate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches; 8 to 12 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: green

Flower characteristic: flowers periodically throughout the year

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown

Fruit length: unknown

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: medium

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in the shade

Soil tolerances: slightly alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: poor

Plant spacing: 18 to 24 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: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Heart leaf philodendron should be located in partial to deep shade on fertile, moist soils. It should be planted

outside only in frost-free areas. Direct sun often discolors the foliage.

Propagation is by cuttings.

Pests and Diseases

No pests are of major concern, but occasionally bothered by scales.

No diseases are of major concern, but occasionally bothered by leaf spots.