

# *Pilea cadierei* Aluminum Plant<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

The variegated foliage on aluminum plant is unlike any other, with shiny silver, irregularly shaped markings parallel to the lateral veins (Fig. 1). Leaves are held opposite each other on square, green stems, producing a thick ground cover about 12 inches tall in a shaded landscape. Small, white flowers are produced at the ends of the stems in the summer, but they are mostly overshadowed by the conspicuous foliage.

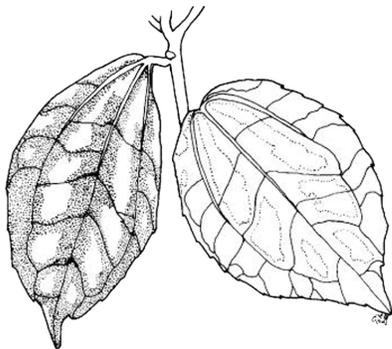


Figure 1. Aluminum plant

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Pilea cadierei*

**Pronunciation:** PYE-lee-uh kuh-DEER-ree-eye

**Common name(s):** aluminum plant

**Family:** *Urticaceae*

**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:** hanging basket; suitable for growing indoors; ground cover; cascading down a wall

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

## Description

**Height:** .5 to 1 feet

**Spread:** depends upon supporting structure

**Plant habit:** spreading

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** medium

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** serrate

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**Leaf shape:** obovate  
**Leaf venation:** pinnate  
**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen  
**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches  
**Leaf color:** silver/gray; variegated  
**Fall color:** no fall color change  
**Fall characteristic:** not showy

## Flower

**Flower color:** white  
**Flower characteristic:** summer flowering

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** unknown  
**Fruit length:** unknown  
**Fruit cover:** unknown  
**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:** occasionally wet; acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay  
**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:** aggressive, spreading plant  
**Pest resistance:** very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect plant health or aesthetics

## Use and Management

Aluminum plant forms a thick ground cover within 2 years after planting on 18-inch centers. Unrooted stems can be struck into the ground and will root if kept moist in a shaded location. You can propagate the plant quickly in this manner. Locate the plant in a fully shaded location since foliage on aluminum plant will discolor in the sun. Provide for irrigation in dry weather and fertilize regularly to keep the plant thick and looking nice.

## Pests and Diseases

Mites can spoil the foliage in hot, dry weather. Locate in the full shade to prevent this.