

Crinum spp. Crinum Lily¹

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Introduction

This large, coarse-textured, upright rosette of broad, light green, 4footlong leaves is topped most of the year with great clusters of fragrant, spidery flowers. A fine specimen plant, Crinums also make excellent underplantings for palms or other coarsely textured landscape plants. Plant four to six feet apart in a mass planting. Install a very low ground cover beneath and around individual plants or groupings to help “set-off” or display crinum lily. They accent any garden or landscape.



Figure 1. Full Form - *Crinum* spp.: Crinum Lily
Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 2. Flower - *Crinum* spp.: Crinum Lily
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General Information

Scientific name: *Crinum* spp.

Pronunciation: KRYE-num species

Common name(s): crinum lily

Family: *Amaryllidaceae*

Plant type: bulb/tuber; perennial; herbaceous

USDA hardiness zones: 8B through 11 (Figure 3)

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

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Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Uses: mass planting; specimen; accent; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size)

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range



Figure 3. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: 3 to 5 feet

Spread: 3 to 5 feet

Plant habit: spreading

Plant density: open

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: spiral

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: linear

Leaf venation: parallel

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: more than 36 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristic: year-round flowering; pleasant fragrance

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit cover: dry or hard

Fruit color: green

Fruit characteristic: showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not particularly showy; 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: extended flooding; clay; sand; acidic; slightly alkaline; loam

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: usually not a problem

Winter interest: plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Well-suited to hot, dry locations, crinum lilies grow from what are among the largest true bulbs, some weighing over 40 pounds. Forming large clumps, crinums should have plenty of growing room in full or partial sun on well-drained soils, and are moderately salt-tolerant. Crinums recover quickly from killing frosts in USDA hardiness zones 8b and 9.

Species have blooms of white, pink, or rose, while others are striped with white and carmine, the so-called milk-and-wine lilies. Plants are available with maroon leaves at some nurseries.

Crinum x powelli cultivar 'Cecil Houdyshel' has fragrant, rosy-pink flowers. *Crinum moorei*, with a rose-red flower, is available in the cultivar 'Album' with white flowers and 'Roseum' with pink flowers. *Crinum latifolium* var. *zeylanicum* is the milk-and-wine lily.

Crinums are best divided during the winter when not actively growing. The large clump is simply lifted and some of the offshoot bulbs removed.

Pests and Diseases

Crinum is a very sturdy plant and is only occasionally bothered by caterpillars or other chewing insects.

No diseases are of major concern, but leaf spots could occur in moist shaded areas.