

Yucca filamentosa Adam's Needle¹

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Introduction

Adam's needle is a slow-growing native plant found scattered through the woods in the southeastern United States. Leaves appear as though they have been shaved because leaf margins bear curved, filamentous threads of leaf tissue. The leaf terminates in a sharp spine. Plants stay small, growing no more than about 3 feet tall. In summer a tall, showy flower spike emerges from the center of the plant and displays prominently for several weeks.



Figure 1. Flower - *Yucca filamentosa*: Adam's needle.

Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS

General Information

Scientific name: *Yucca filamentosa*

Pronunciation: YUCK-kuh fill-luh-men-TOE-suh

Common name(s): Adam's needle

Family: *Agavaceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 7B through 10 (Figure 2)

Planting month for zone 7: year-round

Planting month for zone 8: year-round

Planting month for zone 9: year-round

Planting month for zone 10: year-round

Origin: native to Florida

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Uses: specimen; naturalizing; border; accent; attracts butterflies

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: 3 to 15 feet

Spread: 3 to 4 feet

Plant habit: round

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: slow

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: terminal spine

Leaf shape: linear

Leaf venation: parallel

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 12 to 18 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristic: spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit cover: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristic: suited for human consumption

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: usually with one stem/trunk; not particularly showy

Current year stem/twig color: green

Current year stem/twig thickness: very thick

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun; plant grows in the shade

Soil tolerances: alkaline; sand; acidic; loam

Drought tolerance: high

Soil salt tolerances: good

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: no special winter interest

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

Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

Adam's needle can be used as a specimen to accent an area in the landscape. Its striking texture will draw attention. It has also been planted in mass on 3- to 4-foot centers to form a ground cover effect. Locate the plant 3 to 4 feet back from the edge of a walk or patio to prevent getting injured from the spine at the tip of the leaves.

Adam's needle grows in its native habitat in well drained soils in mostly sunny locations. It tolerates partial shade well, provided enough air circulates to keep the plant on the dry side.

There is a variegated cultivar called 'Variegata' that has light yellow stripes along the margins.

Pests and Diseases

No serious pests affect the plant if its cultural requirements are met.