

# *Yucca gloriosa* Spanish Dagger, Moundlily Yucca<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Spanish dagger makes a dramatic landscape statement, its blue grey to green, drooping leaves projecting from thick, soft, green stems and spikes of slightly reddish-tinged, white, fragrant blossoms appearing in late spring or early summer. With the sharp needled tips removed with shears, Spanish dagger makes a wonderful accent at entryways or in a shrub border, and plants eventually form attractive clumps. High salt tolerance makes Spanish dagger ideal for seaside plantings.



Figure 1. Full Form—*Yucca gloriosa*: Spanish dagger, moundlily yucca.  
Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 2. Leaf —*Yucca gloriosa*: Spanish dagger, moundlily yucca.  
Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Yucca gloriosa*

**Pronunciation:** YUCK-kuh glor-ree-OH-suh

**Common name(s):** Spanish dagger, moundlily yucca

**Family:** *Agavaceae*

**Plant type:** shrub

**USDA hardiness zones:** 6 through 11 (Figure 4)

**Planting month for zone 7:** year-round

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Figure 3. Flower—*Yucca gloriosa*: Spanish dagger, moundlily yucca.  
Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS

**Planting month for zone 8:** year-round

**Planting month for zone 9:** year-round

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year-round

**Origin:** native to Florida

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

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

**Availability:** grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

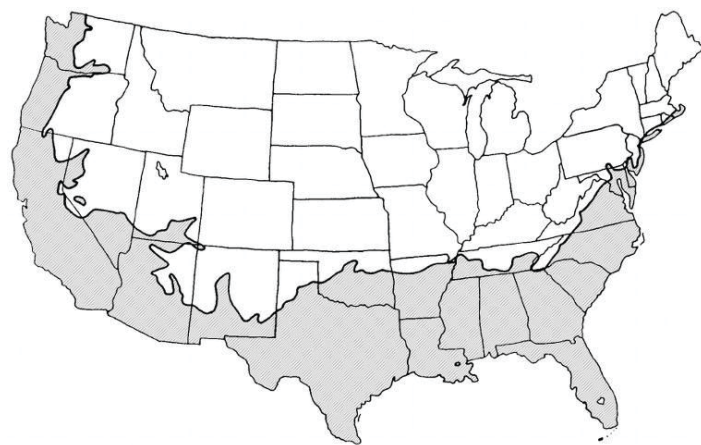


Figure 4. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

## Description

**Height:** 6 to 8 feet

**Spread:** 4 to 8 feet

**Plant habit:** upright

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** coarse

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

**Leaf shape:** linear

**Leaf venation:** parallel

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** 18 to 36 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

## Flower

**Flower color:** white

**Flower characteristic:** summer flowering; spring flowering; pleasant fragrance

## 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:** typically multi-trunked or clumping stems; can be trained to grow with a short, single 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

**Soil tolerances:** alkaline; sand; acidic; loam

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Soil salt tolerances:** good

**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

## Other

**Roots:** sprouts from roots or lower trunk

**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

Spanish dagger is often confused with Spanish bayonet. Leaf margins on Spanish dagger (*Yucca gloriosa*) are smooth, whereas those on Spanish bayonet (*Yucca aloifolia*) are rough. The outer halves of the leaves on Spanish dagger also bend toward the ground, whereas those on Spanish bayonet do not.

Growing in full sun or partial shade, Spanish dagger does well on any well-drained soil and should be watered sparingly, if at all.

The cultivar 'Nobilis' is an improved form with dark green leaves.

Propagation is by division of the suckers or by cuttings of any size at any season. Occasionally plants are grown from seed.

## Pests and Diseases

Pest problems include scale and yucca moth larvae, which may bore through and weaken the terminal shoot.

Leaf spot can be a problem in areas with poor air circulation.