



Variegated Sword Lily

Furcraea selloa var. marginata

Plant Height: 12 feet

Flower Height: 20 feet

Spread: 8 feet

Sunlight: ☐ ☒

Hardiness Zone: 9a

Other Names: Variegated False Agave, Wild Sisal

Description:

A showy rosette of long green leaves with contrasting yellow margins that are wavy with toothy spines, rise up on a thick trunk; at plant maturity, a flower spike soars upward, bearing yellow-green blooms; a great accent planting

Ornamental Features

Variegated Sword Lily features bold spikes of fragrant green flowers with chartreuse overtones rising above the foliage in mid summer. It has attractive green foliage edged in yellow. The succulent sword-like leaves are highly ornamental and remain green throughout the winter. The rough bark and dark brown branches add an interesting dimension to the landscape.

Landscape Attributes

Variegated Sword Lily is a multi-stemmed evergreen shrub, selected and trained to grow in a small tree-like form with the primary plant grafted high atop a standard. Its strikingly bold and coarse texture can be very effective in a balanced landscape composition.

This shrub will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and usually looks its best without pruning, although it will tolerate pruning. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Spiny



Variegated Sword Lily
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Variegated Sword Lily foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Variegated Sword Lily is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Variegated Sword Lily will grow to be about 12 feet tall at maturity extending to 20 feet tall with the flowers, with a spread of 8 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 4 feet from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 14 years.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers dry to average moisture levels with very well-drained soil, and will often die in standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for xeriscaping or the moisture-conserving landscape. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in poor soils. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by multiplication of the underground bulbs.

Variegated Sword Lily makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. Its large size and upright habit of growth lend it for use as a solitary accent, or in a composition surrounded by smaller plants around the base and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.