Sugar Cane

Saccharum officinarum

Plant Height: 8 feet

Flower Height: 10 feet

Spread: 8 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 9

Other Names: Sugarcane

Description:

This impressive grass creates a massive clump of gracefully arching, rich green leaves that is great for screening; white to gray flower spikes rise in late summer, but rarely when grown as an annual; excellent for borders or containers



Sugar Cane
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Sugar Cane's attractive large grassy leaves remain dark green in color with pointy white spines and tinges of grayish green throughout the season on a plant with an arching habit of growth. It has masses of beautiful plumes of white flowers with gray overtones rising above the foliage from late summer to early fall, which are most effective when planted in groupings. The flowers are excellent for cutting. The tan seed heads are carried on plumes from mid fall to late winter.



Sugar Cane flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Sugar Cane is an herbaceous perennial grass with a shapely form and gracefully arching stems. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other garden plants with finer foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Sugar Cane is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Sugar Cane will grow to be about 8 feet tall at maturity extending to 10 feet tall with the flowers, with a spread of 8 feet. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years. As an herbaceous perennial, this plant will usually die back to the crown each winter, and will regrow from the base each spring. Be careful not to disturb the crown in late winter when it may not be readily seen!

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is not originally from North America.

Sugar Cane is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its height, it is often used as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants 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 growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.