

Thai Black Banana

Musa balbisiana 'Thai Black'



Thai Black Banana
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 20 feet

Spread: 18 feet

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: 8

Other Names: Black Thai Banana

Description:

A tall variety with large green leaves that are tinged black on the undersides and midribs; sweet tasting yellow fruit is occasionally seeded; best suited to warm temperate climates and can take light freezes; a great garden or landscape accent

Ornamental Features

Thai Black Banana is a wonderfully ornamental plant with characteristically tropical foliage, uniquely interesting flowers and delicious edible fruit. Its attractive enormous oval leaves remain forest green in color with pointy black spines and tinges of dark gray throughout the year. This plant features bold panicles of burgundy flowers dangling from the stems in mid spring. The fruits are showy yellow bananas carried in abundance from early to late fall. The black stems are very colorful and add to the overall interest of the plant.

This plant is primarily grown as an ornamental, but it's also valued for its edible qualities. The sweet bananas are most often used in the following ways:

- Fresh Eating
- Cooking
- Baking

Landscape Attributes

Thai Black Banana is an herbaceous evergreen perennial with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its wonderfully bold, coarse texture can be very effective in a balanced garden composition.

This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. It is a good choice for attracting birds to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Thai Black Banana is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Orchard/Edible Landscaping
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Thai Black Banana will grow to be about 20 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 18 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 3 feet from the ground. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 30 years. As an evegreen perennial, this plant will typically keep its form and foliage year-round.

Bananas are curious plants in a botanical sense. Strictly speaking they are perennials, with individual shoots rising up from underground rhizomes and maturing in one to two years, then ultimately dying after producing fruit, to be replaced by new shoots from the base. However, given their ultimate size and coarseness they almost behave as small trees in the landscape. This plant should only be grown in full sunlight. 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. This plant should not require much in the way of fertilizing once established, although it may appreciate a shot of general-purpose fertilizer from time to time early in the growing season. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America.; however, as a cultivated variety, be aware that it may be subject to certain restrictions or prohibitions on propagation.

Thai Black Banana is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting 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 growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.