

Red Tiger Banana

Musa sikkimensis 'Red Tiger'



Red Tiger Banana foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 12 feet

Spread: 10 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 6

Other Names: Darjeeling Banana

Description:

A hardy variety that dies back in winter but will re-sprout from the roots in spring; features huge green leaves with dramatic burgundy variegation; very fast growing; evergreen and much taller in frost free climates; a nice accent or container plant

Ornamental Features

Red Tiger Banana is a wonderfully ornamental plant with characteristically tropical foliage and uniquely interesting flowers. Its attractive enormous oval leaves emerge purple in spring, turning green in color with showy burgundy variegation throughout the season. This plant features showy creamy white flowers with coral-pink calyces dangling from the stems in mid summer. The green fruits which fade to yellow over time are held in clusters in early fall. The dark red stems are very colorful and add to the overall interest of the plant.

Landscape Attributes

Red Tiger Banana is an herbaceous tropical perennial with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other garden plants with finer foliage.

This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and should never be pruned except to remove any dieback, as it tends not to take pruning well. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Red Tiger Banana is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Red Tiger Banana will grow to be about 12 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 10 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 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!

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 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. This plant is a heavy feeder that requires frequent fertilizing throughout the growing season to perform at its best. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America.

Red Tiger 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.