Smooth Agave

Agave desmetiana



Smooth Agave
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Plant Height: 3 feet

Flower Height: 8 feet

Spread: 4 feet

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: 8a

Other Names: Spineless Jade Agave

Description:

As an ornamental, this variety is usually grown in rock gardens, cactus and succulent gardens; large arching leaves are bright jade green; generally smaller when grown in containers; may take many years to bloom, then rosette dies; makes a great accent

Ornamental Features

Smooth Agave features bold spikes of yellow cup-shaped flowers rising above the foliage in early summer. It has attractive bluish-green evergreen foliage. The succulent sword-like leaves are highly ornamental and remain bluish-green throughout the winter.

Landscape Attributes

Smooth Agave is a multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. 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. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Suckering
- Spiny

Smooth Agave is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Smooth Agave will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity extending to 8 feet tall with the flowers, with a spread of 4 feet. It tends to fill out right to the ground and therefore doesn't necessarily require facer plants in front. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 30 years.

This shrub should only be grown in full sunlight. 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 a low-water garden or xeriscape application. Like most succulents and cacti, this plant prefers to grow in poor soils and should therefore never be fertilized. 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.

Smooth Agave makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use 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 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.