

AGAVE AMERICANA VARIEGATA

Family: Agavaceae (now Asparagaceae)

Origin: Mexico (North America)



Agave americana has many variegated forms that show differences in the leaves and names. Like most agaves, it produces a flower stalk only once in its lifetime, after ten to twenty years. The flower stalk grows to twenty feet or more, producing exotic, pale yellow blossoms. After blooming, the mother plant dies.

More a succulent border perennial than a shrub because it does not develop permanent woody stems, Agave americana 'Variegata' is a variegated form of Agave americana, regarded by many as an indoor or seasonal plant for growing outdoors in summer. It eventually forms an enormous rosette of stiff, dangerously pointed leaves. It only flowers

when about 30-40 years old, after which the main plant dies, leaving young offsets as successors.

This cultivar is similar to 'Mediopicta', except that 'Variegata' has green leaves with creamy margins, whereas the reverse is true for 'Mediopicta'.

The name Agave, attributed to Linnaeus, is Greek for "noble", presumably for some of the species that are large stature and have bold structure. These noble plants are often listed as perennials but because most are monocarpic, meaning they bloom once in the life of the plant, the term "perennial" is somewhat misleading and more reasonably these plants might be considered "multiannuals". They are rosette forming plants with spirally arranged leaves that emerge from a center stem. The leaves vary in width, succulence, texture and color. Some have spines on the margins and/or tips while others are unarmed. Some are solitary growing while others produce offsets at their base or on short rhizomes. There are upwards of 200 species in the genus with a concentration of over 125 species that are from Mexico, 15 species within the boundaries of the United States and rest distributed through Central America and the Caribbean basin (including Venezuela in South America). San Marcos Growers grows a number of species and hybrids of Agave. We have selected these plants because they are showy and do particularly well in the mediterranean climate of coastal California.

