

Foxtail agave

Agave attenuata



Agave attenuata is a species of flowering plant in the family Asparagaceae, commonly known as the foxtail or lion's tail. The name swan's neck agave refers to its development of a curved inflorescence, unusual among agaves

What's Unique About *Agave attenuata*?

Agave attenuata plant is already striking with those rosette foliage. But what makes it more appealing is the appearance of its tremendous flowers. You'd be lucky if you ever come across those showy blooms. They look like a long flower spike that curves and drops to the ground just like the tail of a fox.

A fox tail agave flower appears only once in the plant's lifespan. It will take about 10 to 20 years, though. And it appears only during spring or summer seasons. This *attenuata* species is indeed a unique and gorgeous addition to a tropical landscape whether indoors or outdoors.

Appearance

The *Agave attenuata* appearance is very unique once the flowers are present. The foliage alone is similar to other agave species. However, come the flowers and you'll see how magnificent they become. We'll describe the plant's appearance in detail in the following parts, starting with the foliage then the flowers.

Foliage

The foliage of *Agave attenuata* is known to be evergreen. Those fleshy leaves are ovate in shape and soft in texture. Since it's a succulent plant, the foliage is characterized by having the ability to store more water. The colors of the leaves can range from silver grey-green to blue-green or even yellowish-green.

The foliage forms a whorl pattern. If viewed from afar, it resembles the shape of an open flower. Although those leaves look rigid and pointed, it's quite the opposite. Once you touch the blades, you'd discover that they're flexible. We can therefore say that *Agave attenuata* plants are people friendly.



Flowering

The flowers of agave foxtail are the most fascinating. If you've planted this succulent 10 to 20 years ago, you'd be blessed by a long spike of inflorescence. They have the colors of green, white, and yellow. However, flowering is very rare as it only occurs once in its lifetime.

The inflorescence appears at the center of the rosette forming a tall arch that could reach up to 5 to 10 feet in height. The curve then drops to the ground and then makes another bend upward. The *Agave attenuata* shape resembles that of a foxtail, thus, the name.

Size and Growth

The size of *Agave attenuata* can reach up to 2 to 3 feet tall and 3 to 4 feet wide. Outdoors, they can grow this big. So, make sure to give them plenty of space if you're planning to include them in your garden. They also produce offshoots on its base so expect that they'll become dense.

Growing *Agave attenuata* will take time. This plant has a slow growth rate like most succulents do. You have the option to plant them in pots for indoor setups. That way, maintaining your agave to a smaller size will be a lot easier.

Fragrance

Even though the flowers are extravagant in appearance, do not expect any *Agave attenuata* fragrance to charm you. The plant has no fragrance at all, neither the leaves nor the blooms.

However, this is good news to anyone who is quite sensitive to fragrant odors. If you have asthma conditions, we know you can relate. Worry not because you can safely keep this plant indoors. They won't trigger any form of odor sensitivity at home.

On the other hand, if you are looking for a pleasant-smelling agave, go for *Agave schottii*. This species produces flowers that are sweet and fragrant.

Toxicity

As far as *Agave attenuata* toxicity is concerned, worry not. This succulent agave is considered non-toxic to both humans and pets. However, it could have a mild poisonous effect once sufficient amounts are ingested.

We still recommend that you take caution in handling this agave.

For Humans

Fox tail agave toxicity isn't a serious problem for humans. Although, the leaves contain sap that could have a mild poisonous effect. This wouldn't be a problem if you won't ingest those sap. And why would you?

Nevertheless, always take extra caution. Make sure to use your gloves when handling the leaves. This will prevent you from possible skin irritation. Make sure to remind the kids around not to play with this plant more so taste any part of it. This would help you save a lot of trouble in the future.

Plants are lovely but they can also be dangerous.

For Pets

The same case applies for pets. Once your dogs or cats ingest sufficient amounts of the leaves' sap, they can be in danger. The mild poison will work to irritate the mouth, the gut, and digestive system of your lovely pets.

To prevent this, just make sure to keep your foxtail agave away from your pets. Place them in a location that they couldn't reach. If this isn't possible, it's better to place your agave outside your home.

If they happen to accidentally chew on your forbidden agave, go and consult your local veterinary for immediate check up on your pets.

Suggested Uses

There are numerous ways to use foxtail agave in designing your garden. You can plant it at the center to serve as an accent to your outdoor landscape. They are great for beds and borders, rock and succulent gardens, too. You can also plant them in patios.

Indoors, you can plant foxtail agaves in decorative pots. Use them to decorate a bare space. This ornamental succulent would definitely suit a large minimalist room. A balcony or terrace is also a good location to decorate with foxtail agave.

You can group this plant with your cacti and succulent collection. They would surely make a fantastic gang!

