

Yucca - Growing Guide

Growing Yucca

Yucca foliage is tropical or subtropical in appearance and it is therefore perhaps surprising that these evergreen architectural plants are at all hardy in our UK climate. The commoner species (*Y. filamentosa*, *Y. flaccida*, *Y. gloriosa*) came from the south east United States and, as such, have adapted to our climate perfectly well. They will withstand several degrees of frost and salt laden gales without turning a hair. Further inland, or in colder counties, it is prudent to grow them in large pots and bring them into the greenhouse for the winter. In warmer cities they will grow very happily outside in borders or containers set in sheltered courtyards.

In the wild yuccas are pollinated exclusively by yucca moths which then lay their eggs in the ovaries of yucca flowers. The grubs develop eating some but not all of the yucca seeds. For this reason hand pollination of flowers can be necessary for the plants to set seed in the UK.

Y. filamentosa and *Y. flaccida* are clump forming species which will produce side shoots and underground rhizomatous stems which can be divided and cut off the main plant. Yuccas can also be propagated by cutting the leaves in half and placing the stems in a pot of sandy soil in the greenhouse until rooted.

Yucca will grow well in drained sandy or loamy soil in full sun. They are impervious to drought and will cooperate in virtually any soil. They will however rot in waterlogged soil especially if combined with frost.

Yucca have spikes of white bell shaped flowers which can be tinged cream or green. They flower in July and August and the unsightly flower spikes need to be removed when flowering has finished. Unlike some other similar plants, such as *beschorneria*, yuccas do not flower once and then die but can go on flowering each year once the clumps become large enough.



Yucca whipplei



Yucca whipplei



Yucca aloifolia



Yucca filamentosa



Yucca filamentosa



Yucca filamentosa



Yucca filamentosa
'Garland's Gold'



Yucca flaccida 'Golden
Sword'



Yucca flaccida 'Golden
Sword'



Yucca gloriosa



Yucca gloriosa



Yucca gloriosa



Yucca gloriosa
'Variegata'

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