

***Cordyline fruticosa*: Ti Plant¹**

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This Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ publication is part of a document series originally written by Edward F. Gilman. Visit <https://FloridaFriendlyLandscaping.com> to learn more about creating and maintaining attractive landscapes that protect Florida's water resources and environment.

Introduction

Hawaiian ti plant (*Cordyline fruticosa*) is an evergreen large shrub with an upright growth habit (Figure 1). Ti plant reaches a height of 3 to 10 feet and spread of 2 to 4 feet. It has large 8- to 18-inch leaves that have a spiral leaf arrangement (Figure 2). The broadleaf evergreen leaves are very showy and come in a variety of colors including green, red, burgundy, pink, purple, and variegated (Table 1). Leaf coloration depends upon cultivar selection (Table 1). The colorful Hawaiian ti plant is perfect for creating a tropical landscape effect, with its smooth, flexible leaves ranging in many bright colors. This plant also produces a panicle of flowers ranging from white, pale yellow, or purple, and measuring up to a foot in length (Figure 3). The flowers develop into a cluster of showy red berries (Figure 4). Ti plant makes an attractive specimen, may be used in a container or above-ground planter, is suitable for growing indoors as a houseplant in bright indirect light, may be used as an accent, or makes a bold statement in mass plantings.



Figure 1. Full form—*Cordyline fruticosa*: Hawaiian ti plant.
Credit: Ryan Fessenden



Figure 2. Leaf—*Cordyline fruticosa*: Hawaiian ti plant.
Credit: Ryan Fessenden



Figure 3. Flower—*Cordyline fruticosa*: Hawaiian ti plant.
Credit: © ccdqp, some rights reserved (CC BY-NC) via iNaturalist



Figure 4. Fruit—*Cordyline fruticosa*: Hawaiian ti plant
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General Information

Scientific name: *Cordyline fruticosa*

Previous name(s): *Cordyline termanalis* (synonym)

Pronunciation: kor-dil-LYE-nee froo-tih-KOH-sah

Common name(s): ti plant; Hawaiian ti plant

Family: Asparagaceae

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11B (Figures 5 and 6)

USDA Hardiness Zones 9B-11A

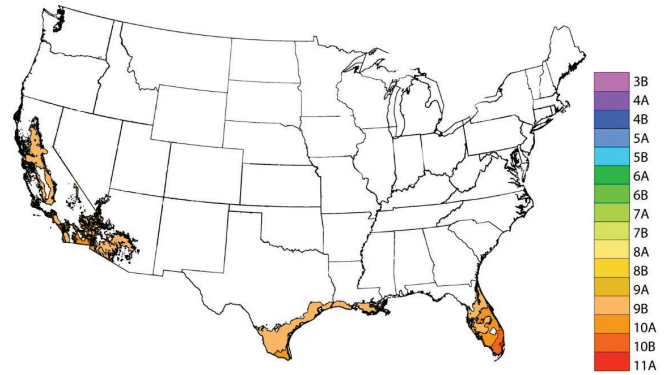


Figure 5. Shaded area represents potential planting zone—USDA Hardiness Zones 9B to 11A; 11B within planting zone but not pictured on map.

Credit: This map is based on the 2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. Visit <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/> for specific zone information.

USDA Hardiness Zones 9B-11A

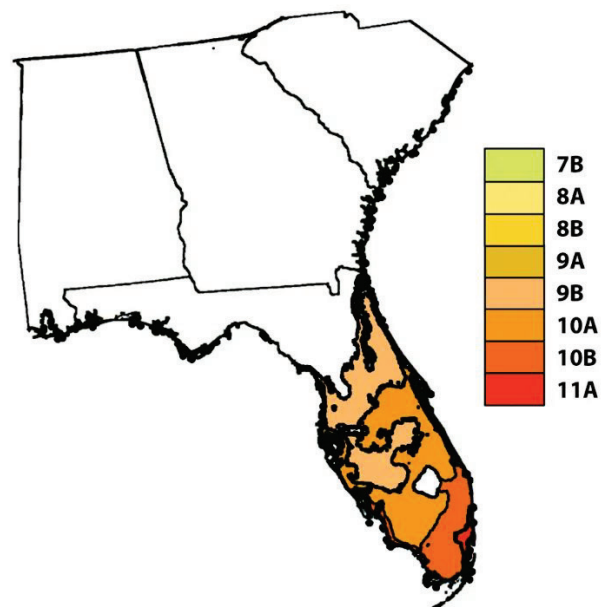


Figure 6. Shaded area represents potential planting zone in the SE Region—USDA Hardiness Zones 9B to 11A; 11B within planting zone but not pictured on map.

Credit: This map is based on the 2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. Visit <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/> for specific zone information.

Planting month for zone 9: year-round

Planting month for zones 10 and 11: year-round

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Uses: specimen; container or above-ground planter; suitable for growing indoors; accent; mass planting

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: 3 to 10 feet

Spread: 2 to 4 feet

Plant habit: upright

Plant density: open

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: spiral

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: linear

Leaf venation: parallel

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 8 to 18 inches; variable

Leaf color: green; red; burgundy; pink, purple; variegated; dependent upon cultivar selection

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white; yellow; lavender

Flower characteristic: spring flowering; showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: less than 0.5 inch

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: red

Fruit characteristic: showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not particularly showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

Current year stem/twig color: reddish

Current year stem/twig thickness: thick

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun; plant grows in partial shade; plant grows in full shade

Soil tolerances: slightly alkaline; acidic; clay; sand; loam

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: poor

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: usually not a problem

Winter interest: evergreen foliage

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Toxicity: this plant displays low toxic characteristics; saponins in sap cause contact dermatitis, vomiting, and other issues if ingested

Use and Management

Hawaiian ti plant grows well in full sun, partial shade, and full shade. It is adaptable to a range of soil conditions with slightly acidic to slightly alkaline pH. Ti plant should be kept moist, but not overwatered, as this leads to disease issues. The large evergreen, colorful leaves and showy flowers and berries make ti plant a great addition to a tropical landscape. It may be used as a specimen or accent, or planted en masse, and is well suited for containers or above-ground planters. As a houseplant, it should be placed in a sunny location and kept at a high humidity.

Plants are easily propagated by cuttings or by sections of stem laid horizontally in a peat moss-sand mixture and kept moist.

Design Considerations

Ti plant provides vibrant foliage in shades of red, pink, burgundy, and green, offering bold color, strong vertical form, and lush tropical texture in shaded to partly sunny plantings. Its upright, architectural habit makes it effective as a specimen near entries or patios, a foundation accent on protected exposures, a dramatic focal point in mixed tropical borders, or a container feature that adds height and contrast. Ti plant pairs well with broadleafed tropicals such as crotons (*Codiaeum variegatum*), gingers (various species), heliconias (*Heliconia* spp.), and philodendrons (*Philodendron* spp.) for layered color and mass; fine-textured companions like

ferns, dwarf palms, and cast iron plant (*Aspidistra elatior*) help soften its structure; and low groundcovers such as lirioppe (*Liriope muscari*), mondo grass (*Ophiopogon japonicus*), or ornamental gingers (various species) create a cohesive base that highlights its vivid foliage.

Pests and Diseases

Pest issues include sensitivity to nematodes, mealy bugs, and mites. Ti plants are also susceptible to fluoride toxicity. Disease issues may include leaf spot and fungal diseases. Ensure proper cultural conditions to promote plant health.

Table 1. Various Hawaiian ti cultivars.

Cultivar Name	Image
'Baby Doll White'	
'Black Magic'	
'Calypso Queen'	
'Chocolate Queen'	

Cultivar Name	Image
'Florica Red'	
'Lemon Lime'	
'Pink Integrity'	
'Pura Vida'	

Cultivar Name	Image
'Ruby Red'	
'Singapore Twist'	

Images courtesy of Ryan Fessenden.

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