



DRACAENA

Dracaenas are woody members of the lily family. Along with their close relatives Cordyline and Pleomele, they are very popular as office and mall plants because of their ability to adapt to poorer growing conditions.

Dracaenas need warm temperatures and should be watered with day-old tap water, distilled water, or rain water to avoid fluoride damage. Tipping at the ends of the leaves can be from drying or from a low pH level (correct by lightly dusting the surface of the soil with lime, watering it in.)

If over watered or allowed to stand in water, leaves will develop yellow and brown patches, and the plant may eventually rot. As with all potted plants, feel the soil to determine when the plant needs watering, and water thoroughly, making sure there is adequate drainage.

Most dracaenas prefer bright indirect light, but many adapt to lower light levels (especially the “Janet Craig” and “Warneckii”). Some of the more colorful cordylines, need some direct sun to keep their color.



POPULAR SPECIES

Dracaena fragrans and *D. fragrans* ‘*Massangeana*’ “**CORN PLANT**”...the best known dracaena; *D. fragrans* ‘*Massangeana*’ (“Mass cane”) has a yellow stripe down the center of its long green leaves; bright indirect light is best, but it will tolerate less light; allow soil to dry slightly between waterings; plants purchased with several “canes” in the pot are naturally top heavy, and should be handled or transported with care to avoid disturbing the root systems; green growing “tips” may be pruned if needed, but thick, woody canes are unlikely to survive if cut.

Dracaena arborea “**TREE DRACAENA**”...forms a dense head of sword-like green leaves atop a smooth trunk; native to North Guinea; very bright indirect light; partially dry between thorough waterings.

Dracaena deremensis ‘*Janet Craig*’ “**JANET CRAIG**”...popular for tolerating lower light; dark green, glossy leaves; slow-growing; especially sensitive to fluoride in water; a sport of the white-striped *D. deremensis* ‘*Warneckii*’.

Dracaena deremensis ‘*Compacta*’ “**JANET CRAIG COMPACTA**”...compact dense rosette of dark green leathery leaves; slow-growing; attractive, sculptural appearance; lower-light tolerant.

Dracaena deremensis ‘*Gold Star*’ “**GOLD STAR**”...sometimes called “**LEMON-LIME WARNECKII**”; beautiful stripes of yellow, green and gray-green; lower-light tolerant.

Dracaena deremensis ‘*Warneckii*’ “**WARNECKII**”...sometimes called “**STRIPED DRACAENA**”; lower-light tolerant; narrow white stripes down each side of a dark green leaf; native to Tropical Africa.

Dracaena godseffiana “**GOLD DUST DRACAENA**”...small shrubby plant with creamy-yellow spotted leaves on wiry stems; native to Zaire and Guinea.

Dracaena marginata “**MADAGASCAR DRAGON TREE**”...often referred to simply as “*marginata*”; prefers bright indirect light; elegant, sculptural growth habit; slender, thinly red-edged leaves; in good light, leaves are wider, thicker and more upright, while in lower light leaves are thin, narrow, and drooping; tall leafless trunks may be cut back to produce attractive branching; native to Madagascar.

Other cultivars of *D. marginata* include: ‘*Colorama*’, with predominantly bright pink foliage; ‘*Bi-color*’, green and white striped leaves; ‘*Tricolor*’, with white, green, and pink stripes; ‘*Magenta*’, with dark, burgundy-green leaves; and a newer cultivar, ‘*Tarzan*’, with wider foliage in a rich green color.

Dracaena sanderiana **“RIBBON PLANT”**...loose rosette of narrow white-striped leaves on white-striped trunk; often used in dish gardens; should be cut back to avoid legginess; native to Cameroon and Zaire.

Cordyline indivisa **“DRACAENA SPIKE”**...grassy leaved plant most often used in container plantings; full sun to light shade outside, bright indirect light inside; native to New Zealand. Also available is *Cordyline australis* with broader, stiffer bronzy leaves, and several newer cultivars in different colors, including ‘Red Star’, Sun Dancer, and ‘Dark Star’.

Cordyline terminalis **cultivars:** shrubby plants grown for their attractive and colorful foliage; most need some direct sun to keep their color. Popular cultivars include BABY TI, BICOLOR, BLACK MAGIC, BOLERO, KIWI, RED SISTER, ROSEA, and TRICOLOR.

Pleomele reflexa **“MALAYSIAN DRACAENA”**...often referred to simply as **“reflexa”**; self-branching stems of dark green densely clustering narrow leaves; moderate to bright indirect light; easily pruned to control size and shape; native to Madagascar, Mauritius, and India. Also try **“SONG OF JAMAICA”** with its subtly variegated light green on dark green foliage.

Pleomele reflexa **‘longifolia’** or **‘Anita’** **“ANITA”**...newer cultivar with a dense terminal rosette of narrow, soft linear recurving leaves.

Pleomele reflexa **‘Variegata’** **“SONG OF INDIA”**...growth habit same as “reflexa”; leaves sport beautiful bright stripes of creamy yellow; very slow-growing; native to South India and Sri Lanka.

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