

## American Century Plant

Maguey

***Agave Americana***, Linnaeus; *A. complicate*, *A. graciliphina*, *A. melliflua*, *A. zonata*, *A. feline*, *A. rasconensis*, *A. subzonata*

**Family:** Acanthaceae /Agavaceae

**Basic Description:** A very large agave with blue-green foliage. Can grow 6-12 feet. Depression patterns form on the leaves from compression before leaves open. It has sharp leaf tip spines and teeth along the leaf margins. An evergreen which dies after it blooms. Some variegated varieties exist.

*This species includes multiple varieties that have different physical appearances. Though color is highly variable, it is always large with numerous offsets. Our A. Americana is called glaucous (meaning waxy gray-blue).*



On-site bloom photo will be added when available. See below for more photos.

**Bloom & Fruit Description:** Yellow blooms grow on a stalk rising up 12-25' when mature. Bloom time occurs as early as ten years or as long as thirty-five years, possibly longer depending on the environment. Bloom usually occurs in June or July. The mechanism that triggers bloom is not fully understood. Seeds are flat disk-shaped and brown.

**Cultural information/Uses/Human Interaction:** Species selected in 1753 by Linnaeus to describe the genus. Has the longest ornamental history of all agaves. Historically cultivated for textile fibers in tropical parts of its range, less so now. Replaced by species with less aggressive spines and teeth. Historically planted as fencerows in Mexico.

**Distribution/Range/Habitat:** Natural distribution is speculative, because it is highly propagated and has spread outside its natural range. U.S. native in Arizona, California, Florida, Hawaii, Louisiana, Texas. Native throughout Mexico highlands. Currently cultivated worldwide and now found feral in Mediterranean climates of Europe, Africa, India and Australia.

**Cultural Requirements:** A very showy ornamental. It's best used as a landscape focal point or in groupings. Can be grown in pots. Requires low water, full sun or reflective heat. It can tolerate some light shade and supplemental water during high heat or long drought. It is cold and heat tolerant. Best soil types include sandy loam, medium loam, clay, and rocky soil.

**Propagation:** Seed set is possible, but separating clones/pups is a more common method.

**Wildlife/Plant relationships:** Popular with nectar species of birds (hummingbirds) and insects. Seeds eaten by granivorous birds and small mammals. Provides protective habitat for birds and small mammals. Has moderate deer resistance.

**Disease/Pathology/toxins:** agave snout weevil is a threat with weak plants being more susceptible.

Liquid in leaf is acidic and can cause skin irritation.

**Status:** (endangered, CITES, watchlist etc.)

**Resources:**

*Agaves, Yucca and Related Plants*, Mary & Gary Irish  
University of Arizona, Pima County Cooperative Extension  
Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, University of Texas at Austin



Three views of leaf impressions left as leaves open up from the heart in the center of the plant.