

Smooth-Edged Agave

GENERAL

Origin	: Mediterranean, sub-tropical
Vigour	: fairly fast growing
Humidity	: very arid, semi-arid
Propagation	: direct sowing, division
Maintenance	: low

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: resistant
Dessication	: resistant
Stagnant water	: vulnerable
Irrigation	: low
Salinity/ppm	: moderate (2000 ppm)
Hardiness	: -3°C

SHAPE

Type	: cacti, succulents
Height	: 1.2 m-1.8 m
Spread	: 2 m-3.5 m
Foliage	: evergreen

FLOWER

Colour	: light green, secondary: light yellow
Size	: 500 cm
Period	: June - September
Smell	: scented, moderate, flower

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: capsule
Fruit size	: 4 cm - 5 cm

In its shape, this Agave resembles *A. americana*, although the leaf edges do not have sharp spines and the narrower foliage is not bent downwards. However, the tip is just as dangerous to anyone nearby. The Agave does grow faster and develops a short, thick trunk. Flowers are creamy-white. The genus' name derives from the Greek agavos, which means 'admirable'. Easily grown in all arid regions, and as with many other desert plants, Agaves do not like fertilisers and prefer soils with low organic content. Waterlogging in pots or rock may kill Agaves. Healthy specimens are usually pest-free, but mealybugs or scale can easily be washed off the huge leaves. The flowering stem is stunning, but results in a dead foliage clump that needs to be disposed of carefully. However, offshoots make new plants easily. Plants do not flower before the age of 10, but may take up to 30 years before doing so and then dying. This species produces tough fibres that are used for matting, twine, sandals or brushes. Sisal for rope is probably the best known product. Additionally, Native Americans made medical use of Agaves. Other Agave species suitable for planting in Arriyadh, or occasionally seen there, are *Agave colorata*, *Agave palmeri*, *Agave parryi* and *Agave weberii*.

