

Mother-in-Law's Tongue, *Snake Plant*

GENERAL

Origin	: sub-tropical, tropical
Vigour	: slow-growing
Humidity	: semi-humid, very humid
Propagation	: cuttings, division
Maintenance	: low

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: vulnerable
Dessication	: vulnerable
Stagnant water	: vulnerable
Irrigation	: medium
Salinity/ppm	: moderate (2500 ppm)
Hardiness	: +3°C

SHAPE

Type	: cacti, succulents
Height	: 0.3 m-1.5 m
Spread	: 0.2 m-1.5 m
Foliage	: evergreen

FLOWER

Colour	: pale green
Period	: June - June
Smell	: scented, flower, sweet

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: berry
Fruit size	: 0.8 cm
Toxicity	: inedible

This species is traded as Bowstring Hemp, Mother-in-Law's Tongue or Snake Plant. It originates from Nigerian woodlands, and has since long been cultivated as a long-lived indoor plant and as a reliable outdoor perennial that resists harsh conditions. Dagger-shaped, evergreen leaves form dense clumps emerging from fleshy roots and rhizomes that enable the plant to spread slowly. Their dark green is mottled with very light-green horizontal lines. They may be propagated by leaf cuttings, while cultivars need to be multiplied by dividing clumps. Very common is 'Laurentii', with yellow lines along the margin. It should not be exposed to full sunlight where the edges can easily get burned. Leaf cuttings from this cultivar degenerate to offspring with green leaves without variegation. Another popular variety is 'Hahnii', growing compactly to about 30 cm height. The species and 'Laurentii' both grow to about 1.5 metres high. Plenty of light is required to induce the development of flowering stalks. They bear greenish inflorescences that release a pleasant scent. Established plants will tolerate drought for weeks, but will turn pale if totally neglected. The soil should be moderately fertile and drain well, since overwatering kills the plants quickly. Snake Plants can be used outside as accent plants in rock gardens. Being free of pests and diseases and demanding no maintenance, this species and its cultivars should be used more often in Arriyadh's public and private gardens, where they will need some shelter.

