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Yucca

Yucca species are wide ranging throughout the Western hemisphere. Members of this genus will be found growing from Canada to Central America. They have adapted to some very humid regions of the subtropical Americas as well as thriving throughout some of the most barren of deserts.

Yuccas are related to Agaves in the Agavaceae family of plants. One important difference is that most Yuccas are regular bloomers and do not die after blooming. There are some exceptions and one should look up the characteristics of individual species.

These plants are mostly quite large in maturity. They have two distinct growth forms. They either grow as stem less rosettes or arborescently in various tree forms. The tree forms tend to grow as single stalks until blooming when they will branch from the bloom point.

Yuccas provided a wide range of useful products for the Native American populations. The fibrous leaves were used for baskets, coverings for shelters, sleeping mats, even clothing and for the twine that could be made from the fibers themselves. The flowers, fruit and seeds were all important foods. The roots contain a high amount of saponin which is still used for a base of soaps today. The Mexican markets still prefer twines made from the fibers of the Yucca leaves.

We grow them for their fantastic structure and form in our gardens. The bloom stalks with their 3 to 5 feet of usually white blooms are a wonderful addition to the spring and summer garden. Many Yuccas can be grown throughout North America. The key to success is drainage. they will tolerate a large amount of rain, but do not like to have "wet feet". The next time you have one blooming, try tasting the petals of the flowers. We add them to our summer salads.