

Dieffenbachia seguine

Common name: Dumb Cane

Family: Araceae

Habit: Shrub

Location: Botanical Garden

Distribution: It is native to the tropical Americas—from southern Mexico, through Central America, to northern South America and Brazil. It is also native to several Caribbean islands, including Puerto Rico.

Description:

The herbaceous perennial grows 3 feet (0.91 m) to 10 feet (3.0 m) in height and 2 feet (0.61 m) to 3 feet (0.91 m) in width bearing dark green leaves with irregular zones of creamy white along the primary lateral veins. Leaves will reach 47 cm long by about half as wide. Petioles are 30 cm long and winged along about half of their length. They make a tough and durable houseplant that will withstand low light conditions. Plants may flower at any time of the year if conditions are favorable. Their "flowers", rather inflorescences are spadices, erect, often white, housed within boat-shaped green spathes. The spadix carries the actual numerous flowers.

Uses:

Dieffenbachia seguine is cultivated as an ornamental plant in temperate shade gardens and as a potted house plant. Dieffenbachias are easy houseplants that tolerate a wide range of conditions. The name Dumb Cane reflects the fact that the acrid sap will burn the mouth and numb the throat to the extent that it may even paralyze the vocal cords. Some people may get a skin rash from the plant's sap. This plant can be toxic if eaten.

