

Friday, March 1, 2024

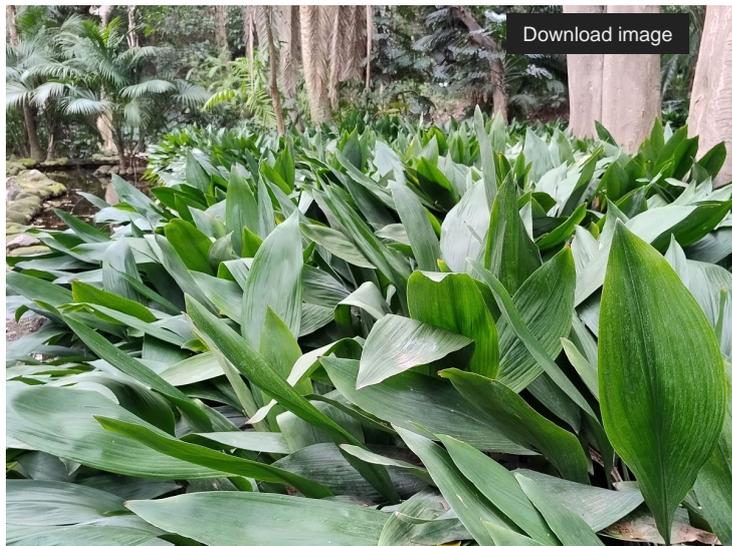
Aspidistra elatior

Scientific name: *Aspidistra elatior* Blume

Family: *Asparagaceae*

Common name: Aspidistra Species, Cast Iron Plant, Bar Room Plant

Aspidistra is a species well known throughout the world. It has earned a privileged place in all courtyards, doorways, and shady gardens in regions with a temperate climate, as it is very hardy and requires little care. It is native to southern Japan, from where it was introduced to China; it later entered Europe in 1824, and from there it has spread to many other places in America.



The plant is about half a meter tall. Its abundant leaves, which grow upright and slightly arched, form a dense and elegant bush. The leaves sprout from the underground stem or rhizome on a long petiole; they are between 20 and 40 centimeters long and about 10 centimeters wide, elliptical in shape, leathery, and deep dark green. Some years in spring it produces flowers, although this is not usually the case for plants grown in pots; they are purple in color, but are difficult to see because they are small, solitary, and close to the ground, under the leaf litter. The name of this genus comes from the Greek *aspideon*, a small, round shield, which may refer to the shape of the stigma or that of its leaves; *elatior* translates as 'taller', which refers to its stature.

In Japan, it was customary to serve sushi on pieces of aspidistra leaf, which, in addition to being decorative, promote preservation due to their antibacterial properties. The common English name Cast Iron Plant refers to the fact that it is almost indestructible. It is also known as the Bar Room Plant because, due to its ability to adapt to closed and smoky environments, it was a staple in every 19th-century pub. It can be seen in various places in La Concepción, such as the wisteria arbor or the González Andreu Garden.