

## Agave attenuata Spineless Century Plant<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

More common in California landscapes than Florida, Spineless Century Plant is more suited for smaller landscapes due to its smaller stature than the Century Plant (Figure 1). Foliage is a soft light blueish-green and does not terminate in a spine. The emerging group of leaves forms an attractive cone shape in the center of the plant. It can be included in gardens frequented by children, whereas the spines on the Century Plant can be hazardous with youngsters nearby.

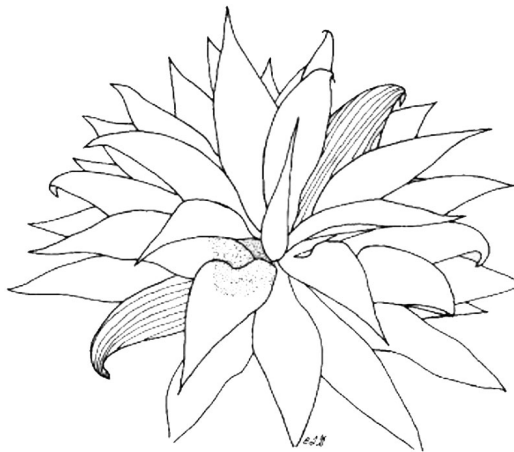


Figure 1. Spineless Century Plant.

### General Information

**Scientific name:** *Agave attenuata*

**Pronunciation:** uh-GAW-vee at-ten-yoo-AY-tuh

**Common name(s):** Spineless Century Plant

**Family:** *Agavaceae*

**Plant type:** shrub

**USDA hardiness zones:** 9 through 11 (Fig. 2)

**Planting month for zone 9:** year round

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** border; accent; mass planting

**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

### Description

**Height:** 2 to 3 feet

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**Figure 2.** Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Spread:** 3 to 4 feet

**Plant habit:** round

**Plant density:** open

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** coarse

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** terminal spine

**Leaf shape:** lanceolate

**Leaf venation:** none, or difficult to see

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** 18 to 36 inches

**Leaf color:** blue or blue-green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

**Flower color:** white

**Flower characteristic:** flowers periodically throughout the year

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** oval

**Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches

**Fruit cover:** dry or hard

**Fruit color:** brown

**Fruit characteristic:** persists on the plant

**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not particularly showy; usually with one stem/trunk

**Current year stem/twig color:** not applicable

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** not applicable

## Culture

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun

**Soil tolerances:** alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Soil salt tolerance:** unknown

**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

## Other

**Roots:** usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

**Pest resistance:** no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

## Use and Management

Spineless Century Plant is a hardy survivor, tolerating heat, drought, and moderate salt exposure. Little irrigation is needed once the plant is established. It grows best in full sun but can adapt to some shade. After 10 years or more (though not a century), a lofty flower spike is produced, with terminal panicles of pale yellow to white blooms. The stem producing the flower dies soon after. Plants can be grouped together in a mass or planted alone as a specimen in a rock garden. Larger commercial landscapes have room for multiple mass plantings which can create a dramatic impact.

Propagation is by detaching the well-rooted suckers appearing at the base, or by uprooting germinating seedlings near the plant.

## Pests and Diseases

Few problems appear to affect most specimens.