

ADAM'S NEEDLE, BEARGRASS

Yucca filamentosa



A 6 ft. flowering stalk rises above 2-3 ft. high clumps of erect, dagger-like, blue-green leaves. The flowers are cream-colored and are followed by persistent seed pods. A tall, stout stem rises from a rosette of rigid, sword-like leaves and bears a loose cluster of white, nodding, bell-shaped flowers. This sun-loving plant is a striking accent plant in any landscape setting and once established, is very drought-tolerant. Yuccas depend on the Yucca Moth as their agent of pollination, and these moths depend on yuccas for food. At flowering time the female moth gathers a mass of pollen from the anthers of the yucca and then flies to another yucca flower, where she deposits a number of eggs into the ovary among the ovules (immature seeds). Next, she places the pollen mass on the stigma of the flower, thus ensuring pollination and subsequent development of the ovules into seeds. As the seeds enlarge, they become the food source for the moth larvae. Many of the seeds remain uninjured and are eventually dispersed, potentially producing new plants. At maturity, the larvae leave the seed capsule, drop to the ground, and pupate. The adult moth emerges next season as the yuccas begin to flower.