



## FYN Garden Q & A Series

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Yards & Neighborhoods



### FYN Topic: Pencil Tree (*Euphorbia tirucalli*)

**Question:** I saw a pencil tree planted in a public children's garden in Georgia. I thought that plant was poisonous?  
Barb N.

**Answer:** Yes, the pencil tree (*Euphorbia tirucalli*) is a succulent shrub with no leaves but branches with an extremely toxic milky sap. Many plants in the family Euphorbiaceae are dangerous if handled carelessly. If branches are broken off, the latex-like sap is a strong irritant to eyes and skin. Pets and children should steer clear of this plant. A few other plants known to irritate the skin include: Brazilian pepper, Caroline or yellow jessamine, crown of thorns, dieffenbachia, mango, oyster plant, poison ivy, poisonwood, fishtail palm and several others.



Pencil Tree (*Euphorbia tirucalli*)

### Useful Links

<http://www.floridayards.org>  
<http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>  
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>  
<http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>  
<http://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu>

Thomas Becker is an extension agent for the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods (FYN) program at the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the Horticulture Help Desk at 533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. or by emailing [Extgardener@leegov.com](mailto:Extgardener@leegov.com). Visit his Web page at <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>

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