**Dracaena reflexa ‘Song-of-India’**

**Common names:** ‘Song-of-India;’
**Reflexed Dracaena**

**Synonyms (discarded names):** *Pleomele reflexa*

**Origin:** Madagascar, Mauritius and nearby islands

**U.S.D.A. Zone:** 10B-11 (34°F Minimum)

**Growth Rate:** Slow

**Plant Type:** Evergreen shrub, small tree

**Leaf Persistence:** Evergreen

**Flowering Months:** Spring, summer but rarely seen

**Light Requirements:** Medium; high

**Salt Tolerance:** Low

**Drought Tolerance:** High

**Soil Requirements:** Wide

**Nutritional Requirements:** Medium

**Major Potential Pests:** None

**Typical Dimensions:** 8’ -15’ tall x 6’ -10’ wide

**Propagation:** Cuttings

**Human hazards:** None

**Uses:** Specimen; border; accent; hedge; indoors; cut foliage

**Geographic Distribution**

*Dracaena reflexa* is a plant native to Madagascar, Mauritius and other nearby islands of the Indian Ocean. It is commonly grown in tropical and subtropical climates throughout the world.

*Dracaena reflexa* ‘Song-of-India’

‘Song-of-India’ is a popular, variegated cultivar of *D. reflexa.* It is perhaps the most widely used *D. reflexa* throughout South Florida. Other notable cultivars are ‘Song of Jamaica’ and ‘Honoriae’

**Growth Habit**

*D. reflexa* is an upright, multi-stemmed, evergreen shrub or small tree reaching 8-20 feet tall in zones 10B-11. Plants usually have numerous stems emerging from the ground level. It is slow-growing with an irregular habit becoming oval shaped with an open crown. Stems are flexible and little-branched. At times an errant stem may grow far above the others.
**Leaves, Stems and Flowers**

The leaves are simple narrow and lanceolate to elliptic, 4-6 inches long. Leaf veins are parallel and young leaves are dark green with a broad pale yellow margins. Older leaves are typically lighter green with creamy margins. Leaves are glossy leathery texture, and they are flexible. The leaf margin is entire or smooth. The leaves spiral upwards on the stem and are alternately and compactly arranged. The leaf base extends onto the stem forming a sheath. Lower leaves will die off over time, revealing slender stems. The stems are silvery brown in color and are covered with leaf base scares from fallen leaves. Flowers are small, greenish yellow, white inside, and arranged on panicles.

- **Green form, early October**
- **Variegated ‘Song-of-India,’ mid August**
- **Flowering panicle, mid March**
- **Young leaves spiraling on stem**
**Use and Management**

*D. reflexa* is not for every outdoor situation in South Florida. It is often used as an interiorscape plant in malls and homes. It is commonly seen as a specimen, accent, or border plant.

‘Song-of-India’ and other *D. reflexa* cultivars grow best in part-sun to bright filtered light. They are adapted to a wide variety of soil types. The drought tolerance is high and it is well suited for non-irrigated landscapes. Keep the plant away from direct coastal exposure since it is sensitive to salt spray. *D. reflexa* is usually not bothered by pests.

Despite its irregular and opened growth habit *D. reflexa* is easily trained to form a dense growth of leaves by the occasional pruning of new growth. As such it can be made to become a useful hedge.

‘Song-of-India’ hedge growing in shifting sun, mid February
Pictorial of ‘Song-of-India’

Growth in filtered light, early May

Growth in filtered light, mid August

Growth in shifting sun, early October

Potted plant in shifting sun, mid June
Pictorial of ‘Song-of-India’

Growth in full sun, late April

Older foliage in full sun, late April
Pictorial of ‘Song-of-India’

Growth in full sun, late April
References

Dracaena reflexa ‘Variegata’. Missouri Botanical Garden


Videos
FloridaLandscape Video Channel
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Glandiulus
Melaleuca
Pony Tail Palm
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All pictures taken by Stephen Brown

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