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# tree ivy



Photos courtesy of Hermann Engelmann Greenhouses Inc.

## BOTANICAL NAME

*x Fatshedera lizei*  
(fat-sha-DER-a or fats-HED-er-a LIZ-ee-i)

## COMMON NAMES

Tree ivy, Aralia ivy, Fat-headed Lizzy, Botanical wonder

## DESCRIPTION

The large, glossy, dark-green leaves resemble ivy, feature five or seven lobes each and can grow up to 8 inches wide. Floral designers often use the leaves in arrange-

ments. The plant itself is easy to grow, with a shrublike base and vines that can grow to 6 or 8 feet. Unlike ivy, its vines don't feature clingy aerial rootlets, so the plant must be tied if it is to be trained as a climber.

## DECORATIVE LIFE

Indoors, with proper care, tree ivies can last for years. New plants are easy to grow from stem cuttings.

## AVAILABILITY

Tree ivies are available year-round.

*x Fatshedera lizei* 'Pia' —Tree ivy, Aralia ivy, Fat-headed Lizzy, Botanical wonder

## in-store and consumer care

**LIGHT** Tree ivies tolerate low light levels although bright, indirect light is best. Variegated varieties need more light.

**WATER** Water regularly in spring through fall, keeping soil slightly moist. Decrease watering in winter, but continue regular misting (see Humidity).

**TEMPERATURE** Average indoor temperatures are fine. Tree ivies prefer slightly cooler temperatures, so fall and winter temperatures should be lower than 70 F. The plants can be moved outdoors in summer or grown outdoors year-round in mild winter climates.

**HUMIDITY** Mist the plants' leaves occasionally; daily misting during the dry winter months is advised.

**FERTILIZER** Feed established plants with a diluted fertilizer once a month.

**PROPAGATION** Start new tree ivy plants via stem cuttings.

**REPOTTING** Repotting is suggested annually in spring. After repotting, keep the plants in cool shade for a week.

## challenges

**PESTS** Watch for spider mites, aphids and mealybugs. Heavily affected stems can be removed, and additional pests can be wiped off with a mild soap solution (spider

mites), a spray of water (aphids) or a cotton swab dipped in alcohol (mealybugs).

**LEAF PROBLEMS** Yellowing, dropping leaves may indicate overwatering. Allow the soil to dry slightly between waterings, and make sure the container has adequate drainage.



*x Fatshedera lizei* 'Variegated Pia'  
Tree ivy, Aralia ivy, Fat-headed Lizzy, Botanical wonder

## tips

**TREE IVY TRAINING** If bushy growth is preferred, pinch back the growing tips each spring. Several *Fatshedera*s also may be grown in a single container for a lush look. For a trailing plant, tie the shoots to a stake, trellis or other support.

**OTHER LOOKS** Showy varieties such as the white-marked 'Variegata' and the cream-splotched 'Annemeike', sometimes referred to as 'Anna Mikkels' or 'Aureamaculata', are available but can be more difficult to grow. These varieties also require more light to keep their markings.

## fun facts

**WHAT'S IN A NAME** Tree ivy is among the rare plants that represent a cross between two genera, in this case *Fatsia japonica* (Japanese aralia) and *Hedera helix* 'Hibernica' (English ivy). The two genus names combine to describe *Fatshedera*. Their pairing was an accidental cross created in a nursery in France in 1910. The name is pronounced "the hybrid *Fatshedera lizei*," without saying the "x," which also is ignored in alphabetical listings.

**FAMILY** Tree ivy is a member of the *Araliaceae* (aralia) family. Besides its parents, other common relatives include false aralia (*Dizygotheca*), *Schefflera* and ginseng (*Panax*).

**RARE FLOWERS** Tree ivies sometimes produce small white flowers, but they are sterile and no fruit is produced. The plants rarely flower indoors. **sfr**

Some information provided by:  
Botanica, by R.G. Turner Jr. and Ernie Wasson  
Chain of Life Network®, [www.chainoflifenetWORK.org](http://www.chainoflifenetWORK.org)  
The Complete Houseplant Survival Manual  
by Barbara Pleasant  
Floridata, [www.floridata.com](http://www.floridata.com)  
Hermann Engelmann Greenhouses Inc.  
[www.exoticangel.com](http://www.exoticangel.com)  
The Houseplant Encyclopedia  
by Ingrid Jantra and Ursula Kruger  
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