



**D. ELEGANTISSIMA**

# False aralia

## BOTANICAL NAME

*Dizygotheca elegantissima*

## COMMON NAMES

False aralia, Finger aralia, Threadleaf

## PRONUNCIATION

Dih-zih-go-THEE-ca  
(or dih-zih-GOTH-ih-cah)

## DESCRIPTION

This tall plant has a delicate look with its long, saw-toothed leaflets. False aralias can grow to 6 feet tall and several feet wide indoors. In the wild, the plants can grow to 50 feet. Their leaves are copper or bronze in hue when young, and they mature to a deep, metallic green that sometimes nears black. When young, the leaves consist of seven to 10 long, narrow leaflets. As the leaves mature, the leaflets become broader and more obscurely toothed.

A relative, *D. veitchii*, has wider leaves with wavy edges that turn from reddish green to dark green as they mature.

## DECORATIVE LIFE

The plants can live for years with the proper care.

## availability

False aralias are available year-round.

## in-store and consumer care

**WATER** Keep the soil moderately moist, and avoid standing water by providing good drainage. Water the plants moderately during the growth period from spring through fall and sparingly in winter.

**LIGHT** Indirect or bright diffused light is best for these plants.

**TEMPERATURE** False aralias are chill-sensitive and should be kept at temperatures above 55 F. Preferable tempera-



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tures are 70 F to 75 F during the day and 65 F to 70 F at night.

**HUMIDITY** Mist frequently, and keep false aralias out of dry, hot air. Low humidity can cause lower leaves to drop and may encourage pest problems.

**FERTILIZER** Feed false aralias with an all-purpose plant food every two weeks from spring to late summer. Feed monthly during fall and winter.

**PROPAGATION** Stem cuttings can be propagated using a rooting hormone and bottom heat. False aralias are most commonly grown from seed.

**PESTS AND PROBLEMS** Spider mites, scale and mealybugs can be problems, but more common is the dropping of lower leaves. Stresses such as low light, low humidity, dry soil, drafts and certain chemicals in the soil can be to blame.

Leaves also may develop oedema (edema), a disorder characterized by small wart-like bumps on the leaves. This is thought to be caused by overwatering or a humidity imbalance. Increase the

## fun facts

**FAMILY** False aralias are members of the *Araliaceae* (ginseng) family.

**HOME SWEET HOME** False aralias are native to Australia, New Caledonia and other islands of the southwest Pacific. Its relatives include *Aralia*, ginseng (*Panax*), umbrella tree (*Schefflera*), English ivy (*Hedera*) and Japanese aralia (*Fatsia*).

**DISHED UP** Small groups of seedlings are often used as part of dish gardens or terrariums.

**SOIL-FREE** False aralias also can be grown hydroponically.

temperature and ventilation around the plant to help the plant transpire, or shed the trapped water.

**LEAF DROP** Some dropping of lower leaves is natural and helps expose the plant's trunk, giving it a more willowy appearance. Ensuring proper water levels, humidity and temperatures will keep leaves healthy. **sfr**

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