



# Parry Agave

*Agave parryi*

Century Plant Family (Agavaceae)

Zones: 5-10

Full Sun

Very Low Water

Location: Childrens' Garden

The Parry Agave is an attractive succulent plant that grows in a rosette of blade-like leaves. The leaves are broad, rigid and spine-tipped, and grow to be approximately 1 foot long. The leaves also have spines along the margins and are grey-green in color.

If one specimen is planted, many offshoots emerge to form colonies. It can be propagated from the offshoots or by seed.

The plant only flowers once in its lifetime, which was once thought of as only once every 100 years, which is how the common name "Century Plant" came to be. It does not take 100 years to flower, however, but when it does, it puts all of its energy into its flower stalk, which can be up to 20 feet tall, and dies soon thereafter. The average lifespan of a Parry Agave is 10 to 30 years. The flower clusters are bright yellow when open, but start out with a reddish tint.

Just before the flowers emerge, the core of the plant becomes full of aguamiel, which means honey water. This aguamiel makes the core of the agave plant sweet and allows for roasting or baking and the juice is fermented to make mescal. The meat of agave is said to taste like pineapple, molasses, and sweet potato. The flesh is very fibrous so after being chewed, the remnants are usually discarded.

In addition to culinary uses, the agave can be made into paper, fabric, rope, twine, carpets, mattresses and filters.