



ReBloom with Gingers

There are many different types of plants in the Ginger family, but they have some similar needs.

In the Mobile area, they thrive in our heat and humidity, but are best planted in shady to partly shady areas—avoid long afternoon sun which will scorch the leaves.

Give them moist, but well-drained soil that has been prepared with organically rich compost. Water them in droughts. The rhizomes (underground roots or stems) will spread over time, so give them plenty of room.

Most gingers will go dormant in the winter, and the foliage on others will die down in frosts, but are all generally root hardy in this area. Trim the dead leaves down to near ground level—leaving some stem or marker so you know where you planted them! A deep winter mulch will protect the rhizomes, and will help renew the soil nutrients.

There is a ginger to fit most needs. Background, seasonal features, woodland setting, tropical look, container planting, groundcover, or naturalizing.

Give them the right conditions and you can enjoy your Ginger plants for many years.

Alpinia species - Shell Gingers



Alpinias are large leaf gingers that lack real stems. Their pseudo stems are made from the overlapping leaf sheaths. They grow from thick rhizomes in upright clumps from 3 to 7ft tall. Several are grown for their edible rhizomes which are ground into spices for culinary and medicinal use.

Blooms: Most varieties flower on last season's growth. This means that to get flowers you need to protect the leaves in winter frosts to get blooms next year from midsummer to fall.

Uses: Good background plants – because of the two season flowering, plant in a protected area where you can cover the leaves when frost is forecast.

Asarum species — Wild Gingers

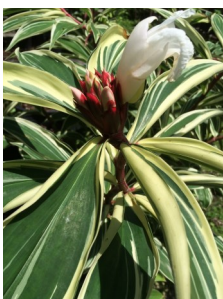
Asarums have rhizomes that are similar to ginger roots, but are not related. Most varieties are evergreen and hardy in this area. They have kidney- or heart-shaped leaves that grow from rhizomes. Very slow growing – usually just two new leaves appear each year. They LOVE moist, but not wet soil.

Blooms: Small brown or reddish flowers from short stems between the leaves

Uses: Groundcover in woodland or shade areas—good for moist soil near a pond or stream.



Costus species — Spiral or Crepe Gingers



The leaves of *Costus* spiral around curving bamboo-like stalks from 3 to 7ft tall and form clumps from underground rhizomes.

Blooms: The flowers are usually at the end of the stalks – most flowers have a cone-like bract with flowers emerging from the sides.

Uses: Mixed borders or feature plants in shady areas

***Curcuma species* - includes Turmeric and Hidden Gingers**



Curcumas have lush, broad leaves that grow up from the base of the plant – from 3 to 6 feet tall. They are slow to appear after their winter dormancy – often as late as July in this area, but grow rapidly. Plant them alongside spring bulbs for continuing blooms. Most have bright orange roots that are dried and ground for culinary and medicinal uses – *Curcuma longa* is the source for turmeric. They go dormant in fall and winter—usually triggered by dry weather. They are more tolerant of direct sun than most gingers.

Blooms: Appear on short stems amid the foliage. Most have spiked bracts in different colors that often appear before the leaves have developed – “psychedelic pine cones”.

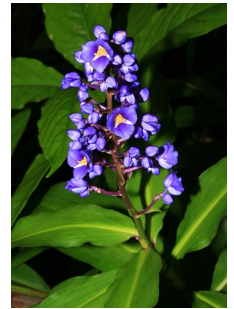
Uses: Curcumas make good stand-alone clumps. Shorter varieties should be planted nearer the front of a mixed border so the flowers can be seen amongst the foliage. Good for container gardening with daily watering when active and root bound.

***Dichorisandra species*—Blue Gingers**

Dichorisandra is similar to many gingers, but is related to Spiderworts. Generally root hardy in this area.

Blooms: Small blue flowers on spikes (*D. thrysiflora*) or on pendulous stems (*D. pendula*)

Uses: *D. thrysiflora* to 5ft tall is good in mixed shady borders where it can rise above smaller plants and shrubs and surprise you with the blue blooms in late summer. *D. pendula* to 3ft tall is better near the front of borders with its more delicate stems and flowers – it is also good in containers and can be treated as a houseplant.



***Globba species*—Dancing Lady Gingers**



Globbas grow from small rhizomes and, for some varieties, seeds and are best treated like naturalizing bulbs in this area. They go dormant for winter and are late to emerge in this area with new growth emerging as late as July - usually appearing after you have forgotten you’ve planted them! Most are 6 to 18 inches tall – will clump from rhizomes and most self-seed. Root hardy in this area.

Blooms: Pendants of bracts with small orchid-like flowers. Colors depend on variety

Uses: Mixed borders, woodland gardens, mixed in with ground covers – good for naturalizing in shady spots.

***Hedychium species*—Butterfly Gingers**

Hedychiums grow from 3—7 feet tall and clump from the rhizomes—usually fast growing. The leaves are lance-shaped and pointed, arranged in 2 neat ranks along the length of the stems Many have fragrant blooms, so plant where you can pass by and catch the scent. They will die back in winter.

Blooms: Flowers look like butterflies topping the stems. A few have smaller flowers in spikes in “bottlebrush” form above the foliage. From midsummer through fall.

Uses: Beautiful background plants that look good in large clumps at the edge of woodland areas. Mixed borders. Will thrive in low wet areas Plant with other ginger species to create an easy growing, tropical shade garden.



***Kaempferia* & *Cornukaempferia* species - Peacock Gingers**



Kaempferias are low growing with attractive foliage and colorful small flowers. Most make an excellent deciduous groundcover under established trees, shrubs, and taller gingers. They will die back in fall, and re-emerge in late spring. Reliably root hardy in the Mobile area.

Blooms: Small usually pink or purple

Leaves: Usually highly patterned with a variety of greens and other colors – the main attraction of these gingers!

Uses: Color in shady areas. Attractive container plants—protect potted specimens from hard freez-

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***Zingiber* species—Shampoo or Pinecone Gingers**

The *Zingiber* genus includes many that are grown for the medicinal and culinary uses of their rhizomes. The most well-known ginger root and ginger spice comes from the plant *Zingiber officinale*. They are commonly called Pinecone Gingers for the cone-shaped bracts that appear from the ground in the summer. Root hardy in this area.

Blooms: Green cone-shaped bracts emerge on separate stalks from the roots. They gradually turn red (most varieties) and then small flowers emerge from the cone in mid to late summer. Most of these cones produce a creamy liquid substance when squeezed that is used as a shampoo ingredient especially in Asia – hence their other common name of Shampoo Ginger. The cones are long lasting and good for cut flower arrangements.

Uses: Fast-growing landscape plant for tropical effect – give it plenty of room!



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