



Stephen & Kristin Pategas

in the garden by Stephen and Kristin Pategas

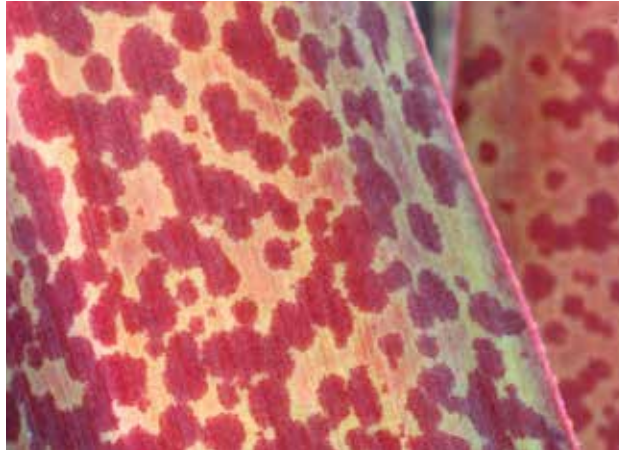
A Strong Mocha Without The Bite

In the landscape we love the look of bold foliage plants such as century plants, otherwise known as agaves. However their striking leaves are usually armed with sharp spines. For some gardens that we design we must shy away from plants that bite; since rambunctious dogs, small children, or those who play soccer may stray near one. So we were thrilled to discover a striking plant without spines. When we were introduced to the name Macho Mocha, our first thought was "Oh, a premium coffee drink for the strong willed." Then we discovered that *X Mangave 'Macho Mocha'* is either an intergeneric hybrid between *Manfreda variegata* and *Agave celsii* or a mutation of the former. Whichever it may be, this plant is a knockout specimen without the sharp-toothed or spine-tipped leaves of the agave. In fact, the leaves are rubbery.

This solitary rosette-forming succulent grows to 4 to 6 feet wide and 2 to 3 feet high. The thick, curving fleshy blue-green leaves are dappled with irregularly shaped reddish-brown spots at the bases that thicken and merge towards the tips. In spring, long-established plants may develop an 8-foot-tall red flower spike from its center that blooms with small creamy-white flowers. These nectar-loaded blossoms will attract pollinators and hummingbirds alike. After blooming, the mother rosette starts to wither and die. But fear not, new plants will have developed at the plant's base. We love this regeneration aspect. Ours bloomed in April and we had multiple pups to

pot up. After removing them from the main stem, let the bases dry for a week in the shade, then plant them in a well-draining potting mix and water lightly until they root.

Macho Mocha mangave prefers full sun, but tolerates partial shade. Plant it in well-draining soil and the mangave can take drought or regular watering. Tony Avent of Plant Delights who sells the plant from his mail order nursery in North Carolina, reports this mangave to be root hardy to 9°F, but protect it from frost to preserve the foliage. Local nurseries that carry Monrovia plants can also obtain this mangave. We planted one in a glazed green container that accents the leaves. Placed at our front door it stops visitors in their tracks. Give this plant a special place in your garden and watch the heads turn without any fear of a bite.



Macho Mocha mangave's fleshy leaves have distinct spots that merge toward the tip.



Select a container with a color to accent the colorful foliage.



At right, this eight foot tall bloom creates drama on our front terrace.

Photos by Stephen G. Pategas, Hortus, Oasis.

Hortus Oasis (FL26000315) in Winter Park is a boutique garden design company specializing in residential, commercial and specialty gardens. Stephen is a registered landscape architect and Kristin is a certified landscape designer. Contact them at 407-622-4886/garden@hortusoasis.com

Ruby Red Cleaning

there's no place like {a clean} home

It's your lucky day!
SAVE \$50*



*Promotion applicable for Top-to-Bottom Deep Clean valid for new clients only offer expires 4.15.14

- ♣ licensed-bonded-insured
- ♣ fluent English speakers
- ♣ one cleaner per home
- ♣ environmentally friendly

Call today for a free estimate 321.348.7829

www.rubyredcleaning.com