**Hedychium coronarium** Butterfly Ginger

Edward F. Gilman

**Introduction**

The Butterfly Ginger is one of the nicest gingers for the home landscape because its fragrance is so enjoyable (Fig. 1). Pure white, showy flowers emerge from one large bud some time in late spring through summer at the tip of each unbranched stem. Each flower lasts about one day. Several hundred flowers can appear from each bud during a 6-week period. Each stem grows to about 5-feet-tall. These herbaceous perennials spread by underground rhizomes, often forming dense clumps of multiple stems. Large, simple leaves are borne on either side of the thick green stems. Unfortunately, individual flowers do not last after they are cut from the plant.

**General Information**

**Scientific name:** *Hedychium coronarium*

**Pronunciation:** hee-DICK-ee-um
kor-oh-NAIR-ee-um

**Common name(s):** Butterfly Ginger

**Family:** Zinziberaceae

**Plant type:** herbaceous

**Figure 1.** Butterfly Ginger.

**USDA hardiness zones:** 8B through 11

**Planting month for zone 8:** year round

**Planting month for zone 9:** year round

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Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Origin: not native to North America
Uses: border; mass planting; suitable for growing indoors
Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

Description
Height: 4 to 5 feet
Spread: 4 to 6 feet
Plant habit: upright
Plant density: open
Growth rate: fast
Texture: coarse

Foliage
Leaf arrangement: alternate
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: undulate
Leaf shape: lanceolate; oblong
Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: 8 to 12 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower
Flower color: white
Flower characteristic: pleasant fragrance; summer flowering; fall flowering

Archival copy: for current recommendations see http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu or your local extension office.
**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** unknown  
**Fruit length:** unknown  
**Fruit cover:** unknown  
**Fruit color:** unknown  
**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** typically multi-trunked or clumping stems  
**Current year stem/twig color:** green  
**Current year stem/twig thickness:** very thick

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun  
**Soil tolerances:** occasionally wet; acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay;  
**Drought tolerance:** moderate  
**Soil salt tolerances:** unknown  
**Plant spacing:** 24 to 36 inches

**Other**

**Roots:** not applicable  
**Winter interest:** no special winter interest  
**Outstanding plant:** plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more  
**Invasive potential:** aggressive, spreading plant  
**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

**Use and Management**

Plants grown in full sun or partial shade flower best. Those in the shade often grow but few flower buds are produced. Rhizomes can be dug any time and divided for propagation.

**Pests and Diseases**

No pests or disease normally restrict use of this plant in Florida landscapes.

Place Butterfly Ginger near a walk or window so the fragrance can be enjoyed. The foliage texture makes them nicely suited for creating an accent in a shrub border when it is not in flower.