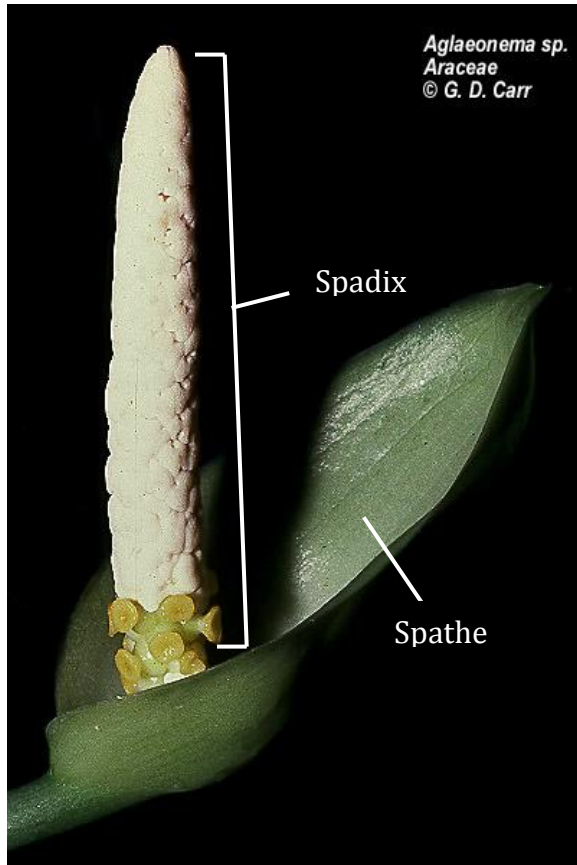


# Araceae

## The Arum Family

104 genera  
3300 species



### Distribution:

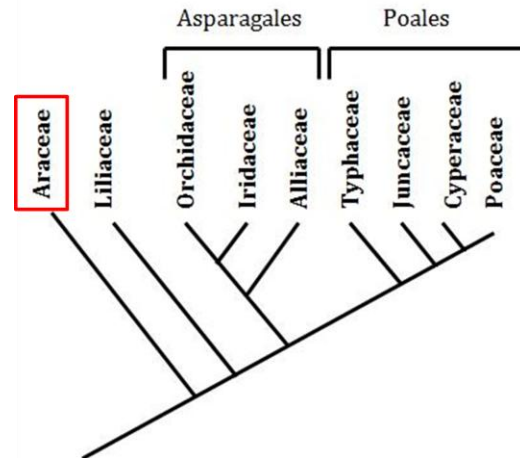
Cosmopolitan; great diversity in the tropics, especially the New World.

### Economic Uses:

- Many ornamentals and house plants.
- *Colocasia* (taro) as food: edible tubers.
- Some species are of medicinal use or are used as arrow poisons.

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## Reduced Monocot Phylogeny of Required Families



### Characteristic features:

- Mainly terrestrial and some aquatic herbs, vines and epiphytes; floating aquatics.
- Leaves are often somewhat fleshy and exhibit a more reticulate venation pattern.
- Both raphide crystals and laticifers, with a milky or watery sap (latex), are common.
- Flowers: many, small; lacking extensive perianth; carpels 2-3; if unisexual then spatially separated in the inflorescence or sometimes plants dioecious.
- Flowers are often smelly, exhibiting a fly-pollination syndrome.
- Inflorescence: spadix subtended by a spathe (a specialized leaf).

### Common example(s):

- *Arisaema triphyllum*: Jack-in-the-pulpit (common Iowa spring wildflower)
- *Lemna*: duckweed – reduced plant body: no stem or leaves; sometimes no roots; rarely flower.

### References for further inquiry:

- Mayo, S.J., Bogner, J., & Boyce, P.C. *The Genera of Araceae*. Richmond, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (1997).
- Heywood, V.H., Brummitt, R.K., Culham, A., & Seberg, O. Araceae. Pp. 345-348. In: *Flowering Plant Families of the World*. New York, Firefly Books (2007).