

Shell ginger - Ceil Dow photo

**ALPINIAS: FABULOUS
FLOWERS, FRAGRANT
EVERGREEN LEAVES!**

by Ceil Dow

Ginger Grower for

[Friends of Mercer Botanic Gardens](#)



Alpinias are fabulous for evergreen gingers and all have fragrant leaves. These freeze back only in the deep, severe freezes but come back easily in the spring. They are definitely back of the border perennials. The three notable Alpinias are:

Alpinia zerumbet – Shell Ginger (*above*). 8-10' – 10' PS – S Can be grown in deep shade where the leaves appear a deep blue green. In full sun, leaves will look more peridot green. Leaves are extremely fragrant!! Fabulous evergreen that can be used as a screen. Very lush in the landscape. The beautiful inflorescence looks like a string of soft pink shells hence its common name, Shell Ginger. Excellent cut flower. Zone 7b

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Alpinia nutans – False Cardamom. 3' - 4' PS-SH NOT USED AS A CULINARY SPICE. Sometimes sold as Cardomon but is not a substitute for the spice. However it is very aromatic. Rub or crush a leaf to release the exotic spicy fragrance! So easy to grow in dense or partly shady areas. Blooms only after a mild winter.



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Alpinia galanga – Greater Galanga 5' PS Prized for its ability to bloom even if frozen back! Thick heads of white flowers appear at the top of 6' tall stems in summer. Leaves are narrow, 6- 8 inches long and fragrant when crushed. Great as an accent plant in the shady area of herb garden or as an outdoor potted plant.



Note: North of Houston proper, Alpinias did freeze down but for the greater part of Houston, these guys were fine.