**Arum italicum** P. Miller

**Italian Arum**

(*Arisarum italicum, Arum maculatum var. italicum*)

- This herbaceous perennial is native to the Mediterranean region, including Italy hence the specific epithet, and the Canary Islands; foliage consisting of handsome dark green hastate leaves arising from tuberous roots; the thickish leaves have lighter splotching along the veins and undulate margins, particularly on the basal half; plants reach heights of 12” to 18” with similar spreads during the fall and winter months; over time plants slowly increase to form colonies and can be used as small scale groundcover if one is patient; it is sometimes called Lords-And-Ladies; the genus name derives from the ancient Greek name “aron” for this plant.
- Foliage tends to die to the ground during warm weather as greenish white Calla Lily-like spathes surrounding a creamy white spadix are produced in the spring; perhaps the plant’s best feature is the stout erect spikes of shiny bright orange-red to red berries which are at peak effect in late summer to fall; all parts of this plant are considered poisonous if ingested and some report skin irritation when handling it.
- Italian Arum can be useful in USDA hardiness zones 6 (5) to 9, but requires increasing shade in warmer regions and frankly is a better plant in cooler climates than in warmer parts of its range; a well drained but moist soils is required; this species is not tolerant of salinity exposure; slugs are reported as a problem at times.

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