



GARDENIA

Gardenias are low-growing, bushy shrubs, mainly prized for their intensely fragrant flowers. They are not difficult to grow, but they do require particular attention in order to flower.

Light

Gardenias flourish in bright light, but it is best to keep them out of hot, direct, summer sunlight.

Temperature

During the budding and flowering period it is vital to maintain a steady room temperature in the low 60F or 16C range. This steady temperature will keep blooms healthy and prevent the common problem of bud drop, which occurs as a result of sudden temperature changes. A steady cool location in terms of temperature is the key to success. Remember this and you will have much enjoyment from your gardenias. Gardenias also like high humidity, so stand them on a tray of moist pebbles or coarse surface clay chips, and mist as frequently as possible. Do not however, apply mist to the blooms.

Water

During the active growing period from spring to fall, water thoroughly when the top 1/2" of soil feels dry. Gardenias have dense roots so use plenty of lukewarm water to ensure that the entire root ball is wetted. Do not allow the pot to stand in this drainage water. During the winter rest period the frequency of watering can be reduced somewhat.

Fertilizer

Apply an acid-base fertilizer every two to three weeks from March through to September. Keep the solution weak i.e. 1/3 or 1/2 the recommended rate.

Repotting

Repot only in spring and use a pot 1" or so larger in size. Remember, gardenias bloom best when slightly pot bound. Avoid disturbing the roots when repotting. A good soil mix would be 3 parts potting soil, 1 part vermiculite, 1 part fine surface or coarse sand. Drench thoroughly with lukewarm water after repotting.

Pruning

Some early spring pruning is usually necessary to keep the plant low and bushy. Nip out growing points of any long, new shoots on young plants and cut out 1/2 or even 2/3

of the old wood of mature plants. Be careful not to cut out flower buds. Stems bearing buds can always be cut back later, after the flowers are finished. The cuts should be made immediately above points where growth-producing buds point outwards rather than towards the center of the plant. This will encourage new growth that will not crowd the center of the plant.