

AFRICAN VIOLETS, CYCLAMEN, GLOXINIAS & HIBISCUS

HUMBER NURSERIES 'GREEN THUMB GUIDE'



AFRICAN VIOLETS

LIGHT AND LOCATION

African Violets prefer a bright window providing indirect and diffused light. (Direct sun may be too bright). Artificial lighting placed 8 to 12 inches above the plants is a good substitute for natural lighting. African Violets will bloom continuously all year, as long as they receive 12 to 14 hours of good light a day. Avoid extremely cool or warm drafts. Lack of blooms and leggy growth usually indicate not enough light.



WATERING

African Violets are native to humid, tropical jungles. In warm, dry areas increase the relative humidity by placing the pot on a saucer of wet pebbles. The pot should not sit in the water!

Water only when the soil surface is dry to the touch. Rainwater or distilled water will reduce salt build-up. When hard water is used, salts accumulate in the soil, which your African Violets are sensitive to. You can leach the salts from the soil once every two or three months by a thorough watering. We recommend regularly watering African Violets from the bottom, by filling a saucer with water and allowing it to soak up the water for up to one hour.

Be careful to avoid wetting the crown (the point on the stem just above the soil where the leaves begin to branch off). The crown tends to rot if it remains too wet. Also, leaves that are splashed with cold water may develop yellow spots. Limit watering from above to once per month.

FERTILIZING

We recommend water-soluble plant fertilizers, such as 15-30-15, which encourage beautiful blooms on your African Violets. These should be used at monthly intervals or in diluted form every time you water.

CONTAINERS AND POTTING SOIL

African Violets grow best in pots that are just large enough to accommodate their root system and specially prepared porous soil mixture that allows air spaces throughout the root zone. Potting in an oversized container may result in soggy soil, which may lead to root rot. We offer several types and colors of pots and containers to highlight the natural beauty of your African Violets.

INSECTS AND DISEASES

Watch for mites, mealy bugs and aphids. These can be easily controlled with periodic spraying with tender leaf houseplant sprays like Schultz Insecticidal Soap.

CYCLAMEN



CARING FOR YOUR CYCLAMEN

KEEP CYCLAMEN COOL

Day temperature 55 F to 60 F

Night temperature 45 F to 50 F

Much lower than our normal room temperatures, but can be found near a window in winter.

ALLOW THEM TO DRY BETWEEN HEAVY WATERINGS.

Water from the bottom. A self-watering pot is good and eliminates guesswork (or use a moisture meter).

THEY NEED BRIGHT LIGHT BUT NOT DIRECT SUN

An east or west window or 1 – 2 hours is best. A north window is too dark. A south window with sheer curtains would be satisfactory.

FERTILIZE EVERY TWO WEEKS THROUGH OUT THE GROWING SEASON.

A fertilizer such as 15-30-15 will keep Cyclamen blooming and healthy.

CYCLAMEN ARE A TUBER AND NEEDS A REST PERIOD FROM LATE SPRING TO FALL.

They are revived in the fall to start flowering again in the winter.

KEEP CYCLAMEN CLEAN TO REDUCE ROT AND MILDEW.

When a flower or leaf fades gently pull it and its stem off of the corm. A quick twist and tug will do.

The plant will naturally go dormant in late spring; the leaves turn yellow and wilt and you will see the corm planted just at soil level. At this time lay the pot on its side as a signal to all family members, babysitter or others who might think that they are helping by watering the plant. Let the plant go quite dry.

In summer it can go outside in shade; again on its side so that it does not get rain. Once every two weeks in summer, moisten the soil surface LIGHTLY so that the corm does not dry out totally. Put it back on its side. In August, the dormant corm is lifted from the soil and repotted in fresh soil. Pro-Mix Potting Soil is ideal.

The side with the slight hollow is the top and it should be placed half in and half out of the soil. Water the plant and put it back into light shade. New shoots will soon appear and will grow stronger as the weather cools in September.

By mid-September, it should be ready to come back indoors. Place the plant in an east window if possible, for gentle morning sun. New leaves should start to grow. Begin fertilizing and repeat every two weeks throughout winter. Your revitalized Cyclamen should be in full bloom in December and continue blooming for many weeks.

GLOXINIAS



TEMPERATURE

Gloxinias do best when the temperature is 18°C at night and 20°C during the day. During the winter the room temperature should not go below 10°C. When the plants are in flower, a cooler temperature will prolong the blooming period.

LIGHT

Place the plants in a window where they will get lots of light but no direct sunlight.

WATERING

Gloxinias are sensitive to excess water. Water on the crown, leaves or flowers may leave water spots or cause rot. It is best to heavily water when the soil is dry. Soak the soil well after potting, but from then until the rhizomes start to grow, water sparingly and only when the soil is dry to the touch. When the plants are showing lots of top growth, water them thoroughly, then allow to almost completely dry out before watering heavily again.

FERTILIZING

Because the Gloxinia is a heavy flowering plant, the fertilizer you use should contain sufficient nutrients to promote numerous new flower buds and also be able to sustain the existing ones. A 5-10-10 or 15-30-15 formula will provide ample nutrients to the leaves, stems and flowers when used according to directions at a frequency of every 4 to 6 weeks, while actively growing.

REFLOWERING YOUR GLOXINIA

Once your Gloxinia has finished flowering, it is important to continually pinch or cut off both the old bloom and its stem. The plant will grow foliage for about 8 – 10 weeks and then begin to go dormant. At this time, the leaves die off and they should be cut back to the soil level. The dormant tuber can then be lifted out and stored in a cool, dark location in some dry peat moss or wood shavings in a paper bag or wood box. In about 10 – 12 weeks your tuber will show new shoots and it can once again be started in a pot to grow flowers and leaves.

If you can't tell which part of the rhizome is the top, start it into growth first in a medium of moist peat and sand and keep watching for the shoots to develop. On some rhizomes, the bottom is rounded and the top has a slight depression (or is concave).

HIBISCUS



Hibiscus is a flowering plant native to the Southern Pacific, which is adaptable to almost any Ontario home. This is primarily due to its extensive varieties, easiness to grow and profuse flowering. Also, it can be used outdoors as a container plant during the summer months, where it will produce an abundance of blooms continually.

WATERING

Hibiscus needs to dry out moderately between good waterings and prefer growing in clay pots where soil can dry out uniformly.

REGULAR CARE

Hibiscus does best in a sunny location, (South or West) when grown inside with temperatures 18-20°C (68-72°F). When grown outdoors they are best in a bright or sunny location but take extra care to not allow the roots to dry out. A 2" layer of mulch on top of the soil will keep the soil cool and damp on a patio or deck location.

When bringing your Hibiscus indoors at the end of the summer, prune about 1/3 to 1/2 the growth off and remove any old stems. This will encourage new shoots for indoor growing. Be sure to spray for insects before bringing the plant inside with Schultz Insecticidal Soap and also with Fungus Gnat Control for soil insects. It is recommended to do an insecticidal soil drench prior bringing the plant indoors.

FERTILIZING

Regular applications of a 20-20-20 fertilizer at every 4 – 6 week intervals and a 15-30-15 fertilizer every alternate feeding will keep your Hibiscus lush, green and full of constantly new flower buds/blooms.

PESTS/DISEASES

While Hibiscus is generally maintenance free, they are prone to Spider Mite, Whitefly and Aphids. Regular bi-weekly applications of Schultz Insecticidal Soap spray will keep the plants insect free. The common diseases are leaf spot, canker, and mushroom root rot.

REPOTTING

Generally Hibiscus prefers SLIGHTLY root bound pots so as to encourage more flower buds. When the roots over crowd the pot and your Hibiscus requires repotting, choose a pot only one size up from the existing one (preferably clay). A fairly light soil mix (or soil-less mix i.e. Pro-Mix) is best to encourage lots of new roots to develop. Also, use Plant-Prod Root Booster to promote new root growth.

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