

CYCLAMEN

NATIVE HABITAT

Cyclamen are native to the eastern Mediterranean deserts and mountains of Persia. Introduced in the 1600's in Europe. Hybridizers did not embrace this plant until the 12th century when Victorian hybridizers began their work. Cyclamen is an ideal plant for hybridizers because of its broad range of flower colors (deep scarlet, pinks, salmon, fuchsia, rose, white, purple, lavender, fringed, frilled and striped) and has patterns (silver lined, mottled, dotted). Today, hybridizers (mostly in Europe) are still improving the cyclamen, intensifying colors and reducing crop time. Lately, flower scent is increasing in importance. In the years to come, we may even have cyclamen that will be fragrant again -- just like the originals from Persia back in the 1600's.

CULTURAL TIPS

Temperature: Tolerates 35°-80°F. Will tolerate short, light frosts. Will not tolerate freezing conditions.

Light: Bright, but not full sun.

Water: Keep soil moist, but never soggy. Water only when the soil is almost dry, never when it is already wet. Excessive sogginess can damage the root system.

Fertilizer: Some required during blooming. Use light applications of any balanced mix prior to blooming period.

Soil: 45% peat moss, 45% Fir bark, and 10% sand.

Garden suitability /USDA Zone(s): Provide a lightly shaded area that is protected from freezing. Frost tender. Good in zones 9-10. Zone maps available upon request.

GARDEN CULTURE

FOR SERIOUS HORTICULTURISTS ONLY

Once cyclamen begin blooming, they can last for 8 to 12 weeks (assuming proper care). Once spent, it is possible to carry over cyclamen for years. Here's how:

MILD CLIMATES

For those living in zones that do not get below 25°F simply take your spent cyclamen and plant it in a partially shaded, but well lit part of your garden. The summer will bring dormancy and the plant will begin reviving in the late fall.

POT CULTURE

For those living in areas that reach freezing temperatures, cyclamen culture will be more complicated.

1. Approximately in April, the plant will naturally begin to go into dormancy. The leaves wilt turn yellow and wilt. You will end up with a bare tuber.
2. Place the pot in a heavily shaded area in your garden, or possible in your basement. Watering is optional at this time. If you water, do so only vary lightly.
3. In August, remove the tuber from the soil and replant it in the pot with some fresh potting soil. Almost any sterilizer houseplant acid soil in nurseries or supermarkets will do.
4. Place the tuber half in and half out of the soil. Do not bury it completely.
5. Begin watering it, keeping it moist but not wet. Do not let it dry out. Leave the pot in a semi-shaded area outside.
6. Before threat of frost or freeze, bring in the pot and place it next to an east or west window.

7. Feed lightly with a balanced food only until flowers appear in late December or early January.
8. Then enjoy!!

PESTS & DISEASES

Cyclamen Mites: If flowers and leaves become distorted and gnarled. Cyclamen mites could most likely, cause it. This is very unfortunate and little can be done to remedy this. About the only thing one can do is dispose of the plant and protect any other cyclamen from the infestation.

Field Mice: In its dormant slate, protect tubers from mice by putting a wire netting over the top of the pot.

(Gray mold): Occasionally, in areas of high humidity cyclamen can contract a disease called Botrytis dirt/dark spots on the flows or grayish mold on the leaves could indicate this problem. It possible, place the plant in a well-ventilated area. Pull off the flowers or leaves that are infected.