



Caring for your Gardenias

This evergreen shrub is extremely popular and is grown for its sweetly fragrant flowers borne from late Spring through to late Autumn. While they grow beautifully when planted out, all varieties of Gardenia make excellent tub specimens.

- *Gardenia florida* is the most popular variety and produces masses of medium sized, waxy white blooms. The florida grows to approx. 1 metre.
- *Gardenia magnifica* has fewer but larger double blooms and grows taller than the florida, reaching 2 metres.
- *Gardenia radicans* this evergreen groundcover has masses of small white blooms and a low prostrate habit growing 30cm high.



Climate and Situation

Gardenias prefer slightly acid soil and a warm sheltered position, protected from the extreme heat of the day. Too much shade will hinder their flowering ability.

General Care

Gardenias in general are 'gross feeders', so to encourage their flowering they need to be fed more regularly than the average plant in the garden. Use a complete fertiliser such as Grow Better - All Purpose Fertiliser in early Spring and Summer. This should be complemented with a liquid fertiliser which is high in potash such as Phostrogen for Acid-Loving Plants at 4 weekly intervals over their growing period from early Spring to late Autumn.

Common Problems

Pale green or yellowing leaves may be caused by a short supply of minerals such as iron or magnesium. This problem can be rectified by regular application (monthly) of Epsom Salts and/or Iron Chelate from Spring through to mid-Autumn.

Another common problem is the yellowing of buds and dropping before flowering. This may be due to a lack of moisture. A fertiliser high in potash might help also.

Pruning

Straggly plants can be cut back in early Spring and then fed to ensure they bush up, though picking the flowers during summer is often enough pruning.

Common Pests

- Scale
if scale is evident on the foliage or along the stem, spray with White Oil. You may need to do this more than once.
- Aphids
can be controlled by spraying with either Pyrethrum or Folimat.
- Holes in leaves / buds
Generally caused by caterpillars. Spray with Dipel.

Follow these helpful hints and you will have more success with your gardenias.