



Super Floral Retailing has created this page for the education of store-level employees. To download a reprintable PDF, please go to www.superfloralretailing.com and select "Current Issue."

gardenia



Gardenia jasminoides
Cape jasmine, Cape jessamine
Photo: Bay City Flower Co., Inc.

BOTANICAL NAME

Gardenia jasminoides
(gar-DEEN-yuh or gar-DEE-nee-uh,
jaz-min-OY-deez)

COMMON NAMES

Cape jasmine, Cape jessamine

DESCRIPTION

Gardenia plants feature glossy dark green leaves and intensely fragrant *Camellia*-like waxy-petaled flowers that can grow as large as 3 inches in diameter. Bloom size and shape (flat or dome-shaped) vary among the plants' cultivars, which include dwarf and standard.

COLORS

Bloom colors range from bright white to creamy white; they change to pale yellow as they age.

DECORATIVE LIFE

Gardenia blooms can last from three to eight days, depending on environmental conditions. The plants can live up to 10 years, indoors, with proper care. Unfortunately, many consumers have limited success with these plants because they are so demanding (see "Challenges").

AVAILABILITY

Gardenia plants are available year-round.

in-store and consumer care

LIGHT Bright, indirect light is essential for plants displayed indoors, but protect them from direct hot midday sunlight. Outdoors (summer only), keep these plants in shady, sheltered areas.

WATER Keep the soil moderately and evenly moist—but not soggy. Water thoroughly when the soil surface is dry to the touch, using lukewarm soft water. Over watering can cause leaves to drop, and irregular and under watering can cause buds to drop.

TEMPERATURE To bloom, these plants require a consistent, narrow temperature range—62 F to 65 F at night and 70 F to 72 F during the daytime. Flower buds may drop or fail to form if daytime temperatures are higher than 75 F or if nighttime temperatures are higher than 65 F or lower than 60 F.

HUMIDITY *Gardenias* love high relative humidity (at least 70 percent), which is best provided with a pebble tray or humidifier. Misting the air around the plants is OK but must be done several times a day; misting leaves can cause fungal growth.

AIR CIRCULATION Fresh, moist (humid) circulating air is a necessity, especially during the winter. Hot, stale and/or dry air can cause fungal issues.

ETHYLENE SENSITIVITY *Gardenias* are moderately sensitive to ethylene gas, so make sure your plants are treated with an ethyl-

ene inhibitor at the greenhouse or during transportation. Also, protect your plants from sources of ethylene gas including ripening fruit, automobile exhaust and tobacco smoke.

FERTILIZER Feed *Gardenia* plants every two to three weeks, from about April or May through September or October, with a *Rhododendron* (azalea) food or nonalkaline (acidic) fertilizer.

SOIL *Gardenias* require acidic (5.0 to 5.5 pH), moist, well-drained soil. A peat-and-soil mix is ideal.

GROOMING Remove blooms as they fade, and cut *Gardenias* back when they have finished flowering.

REPOTTING Repot plants yearly, in late winter or early spring (March-May), until the roots fill an 8-inch-diameter pot. After the root mass reaches this size, repot plants every two years.

challenges

PESTS AND DISEASES Mealybugs, scale insects, spider mites and aphids are common problems for *Gardenias*. An infestation can result in sooty mold or webbing on leaves. These sucking insects excrete honeydew, which supports the growth of the black fungus.

LEAF YELLOWING Causes include nighttime temperatures lower than 62 F, alkaline soil, poorly drained soil, overwatering, watering with too cold and/or hard water.

BUD DROP, LEAF DROP These problems are the result of too little light, over or under watering, poorly drained soil, lack of humidity, too high or too low temperatures, and drafts.

NO BUD PRODUCTION Failure of flower buds to form is a result of too high temperatures (day and/or night) as well as too low temperatures at night.

ROOT ROT Causes include over watering and/or poorly-drained soil.

purchasing tips

- Buy plants that are loaded with well-formed buds and, perhaps, one or two open blooms.
- Check flower buds, stems and leaves for signs of wilt, browning or yellowing foliage, mold, and rot, as well as pests of any kind.

fun facts

FAMILY *Gardenia* is a member of the *Rubiaceae* (madder) family. Relatives include *Bouvardia*, *Cinchona* (quinine), *Coffea* (coffee), *Nertera* (coral-bead plant) and *Pentas*.

HOME SWEET HOME *Gardenias* are native to southern China. It was once thought, however, that these plants came from the Cape of Good Hope, in South Africa. This, along with the flowers' fragrance, gave rise to the common name, cape jasmine. **sfr**