

Gardenia

Info

Gardenia is a popular flowering cold-tolerant shrub that is used in landscapes throughout Brevard County. It is best known for its fragrant white flowers during spring and summer months. This native of South Africa may grow from two feet to ten feet in overall height, depending on variety. Only grafted gardenias should be planted in Brevard County. Ungrafted gardenias quickly succumb to nematodes in our sandy soil and should not be used here except in containers.

Gardenias come in a number of cultivars; most of which reach a maximum height of 6-10 feet with an equal spread. The main difference between cultivars is in the shape of the leaves. All grafted gardenias have similar white flowers with the same fragrance. The 'Miami Supreme' can be used in the landscape as a large specimen shrub or small tree. The semi-dwarf variety 'Veitchii' is a popular cultivar that grows to four feet in height. *Gardenia radicans* is a low growing species which reaches only about two feet in height.

Gardenias require a rich organic soil with low pH and will grow well in sun or partial shade. Gardenias have a low salt tolerance and should be used inland away from damaging salt spray in coastal areas.

PLANTING

Gardenias require a rich, organic soil on the acid side, low in pH, in a well-drained area. Mix Rockledge Garden's Planting Mix around each root ball. Plants should be placed in the ground at soil level and a mulch should be applied two to three inches thick over the entire root area. Newly planted shrubs should be watered every two to three days for the first six weeks, then only as necessary to prevent wilt. Mix **Espoma Bio-tone Starter** in to the soil for healthy root growth.

FERTILING

Fertilize every 3 months with **Espoma Holly-Tone**.

Pruning:

Gardenias should be pruned to shape only once each year. Pruning should be done when gardenias have finished their heavy blooming in spring.

PLANT PROBLEMS

Gardenia spp.

Bud Drop- One of the most common problems with gardenias. Flower buds form and suddenly drop; this may be caused by many different things which include over watering, under watering, sudden changes in temperature, lack of light, insect damage or over-fertilizing.

Whitefly, mealy bugs, thrips and scale- troublesome insects that often attack gardenias; these are all sucking-type insects that remove plant juices through the leaves, weakening the plant. These insects are the cause for black sooty mold that forms on the leaf surface.

Sooty Mold - A black mold that grows on secretion left behind by insects and scale. Sooty mold is harmless to the plant, but usually the insects are harmful. Use **All Season Oil** or **Organicide** oil spray. This should kill the insects and help break up the sooty mold.

Nematodes- Microscopic worm-like pests that attack the root system weakening and eventually causing premature death of the plant. Only a severe problem on non-grafted varieties.

Rockledge Gardens



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Open Mon-Sat 9 am-6 pm • Sun (Feb-May) 11 am-4 pm

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