

The 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 nematode problems in our sandy soil and should not be used here except in containers.

There are a number of gardenia cultivars. Most 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 dwarf species which reaches only about two feet in height.

### PLANTING

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

Plants should be placed in the ground at the same soil level in the pot. Mix **Rockledge Garden's Planting Mix** or **spaghnum peat moss 50/50** with your soil around each root ball. Mix **Espoma Bio-tone Starter** into the soil for healthy root growth. Mulch should be applied two to three inches thick over the entire root area, keeping six inches away from the base of the plant.

Newly planted shrubs should be watered every day for a week or two, then every other day for two weeks. Then water twice weekly.

### FERTILIZING

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

#### ***Bud Drop***

One of the most common problems with gardenias. Flower buds form and suddenly drop. This may be caused by many different things including over-watering, under-watering, sudden changes in temperature, lack of light, insect damage (thrips) 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's 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. This is only a problem on non-grafted varieties.

The logo for Rockledge Gardens features the name "Rockledge Gardens" in a large, teal, serif font. A stylized teal leaf graphic is positioned behind the letter "G" in "Gardens". Below the text is a teal wavy line that spans the width of the logo.

**Naturally beautiful and fun!**

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