

# PATIO PLANTS

Patio foliage plants are blooming houseplants that thrive outdoors during the summer season but can't withstand winters in Indiana. They have several advantages, most notably, their mobility, as they can be easily moved inside and outside and experimented with in different spots in the home and landscape. This is not only an aesthetic advantage, but an economic one as well. Patio plants let you get a touch of green foliage in your home in the winter, while allowing you to landscape the outside of your home in the summer, all with the same plant. They can also have a unique feel, as nothing else gives of the "tropical" appearance quite like a patio plant. Furthermore, rarely can other plants compete with the size of blooms and length of bloom time offered by patio plants.

Patio plants should be placed outdoors after the danger of frost has passed (approximately May 15<sup>th</sup>). These plants need to be adapted to the outdoors before they are moved there permanently. Therefore, it is important to gradually move the plant from the low light conditions of your home to the intense light of the outdoors. Keeping your eye on night time temperatures is also essential as patio plants typically do not do well when it gets below 55° F. Nice transitional areas include semi-sheltered areas such as porches or under mature shade trees. Further keys to successful patio plants lie in watering and proper planting. Most will require fertilization throughout the growing season as well.

Labor Day should signal you to prepare your patio plants for winter. Start by acclimating them to lower light by moving them to a shaded area such as underneath an overhang or shade tree. It is also important to check the plant for diseases and insects during this period. Using a systemic insecticide in your soil can reduce the risk of bringing insects into your home. Pruning should also be done at this time. Because they are a year round plant, patio plants will benefit from a short rest through winter months. This means there should be a reduction in watering and no fertilizer applications for the first 3 months after being moved indoors.

## Recommended Patio Plants

### **Gardenia**

An excellent patio plant available in bush or tree form with *very* fragrant flowers and handsome foliage. Used as a popular landscape shrub in the south. Gardenias require cooler evening temperatures to set the buds for blooming. Can tolerate light shade outdoors and high light inside. Requires acidic fertilizer.

### **Hibiscus**

Comes in bush form and the popular tree form. Flower colors include white, yellow, pink, salmon and red. Single and double flowers are available as well as variegated foliage. Flowers are extremely showy and each one lasts just one day. Feed an acidic fertilizer 2 to 3 times in the summer.

### **Jasmine**

Grown right here at Bennett's, Jasmynes are among the easiest patio plants to care for. Jasmine features many appealing varieties available including "Angel wing," a fragrant bush form with star shaped flowers. "Night blooming," another popular variety, features rounded fragrant flowers. Many types can be trained on trellises or kept as a bush.

### **Mandevilla**

Dark green, rough textured foliage really highlights the 4" blooms on this plant, grown right here at Bennett's. Most often the flower color is pink but there are white and yellow varieties available. Vines vigorously and requires plenty of support as it grows. Blooms all summer long, and prefers a high light location.

### **Nerium oleander – Oleander**

Interesting foliage form is quite attractive. Has a bushy appearance or may be pruned into a tree form. Hot pink or white flowers are borne on the tips of branches. Oleander prefers a sunny spot outside and high light inside. The plant is reported to be poisonous and appropriate precautions should be taken.

### **Citrus – Lemon, Lime, Orange, Grapefruit**

Citrus is capable of producing edible fruit in a high light location both indoors and out. Most varieties WILL require pollination for fruiting. Features wonderfully fragrant blossoms and beautiful fruit. Prefers a slightly acid fertilizer for best growth.

### **Dipladenia**

Produces deep rose flowers and can be grown as a vining plant or bush. If grown as a vine can climb to 10' in height. Will bloom indoors throughout the year. One of the best patio type plants for Indiana summers. Prefers high light. New variety "Scarlet Pimpernel" is a bright red!

### **Adenium obesum 'Desert Rose'**

This succulent plant produces unique rose-pink flowers. Grows to 3-4' tall and 4' wide. Prefers high light both indoors and out. Blooms very young and has excellent heat tolerance. Unique form makes this a valuable plant even when not in bloom.

**Allamanda cathartica**

Available in both bush and vining forms. The bush form produces abundant small yellow blooms, while the vining form produces 3” yellow or pinkish-brown flowers. Likes to be in a sunny location outdoors and a high light location indoors.

**Bougainvillea**

Grown right here at Bennett’s, bougainvillea works well growing in a hanging basket or can be used as a climbing vine. It is one of the most popular and widely grown tropical vines. Many of the newer varieties feature striking variegated leaf forms. Flower colors range from white, pink, and purple. Prefers high light both inside and out.

We at Bennett’s are here every day to give “Helping Hand Hints” personally, one to one. Many gardening problems are very specific, and we couldn’t possibly cover all aspects in these pamphlets. Any time you have a specific problem or need help, feel free to call. It’s our job to help you be successful in your growing endeavors, and we thoroughly enjoy giving you a “helping hand.”

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# Helping Hand Hints



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