

Wallsend Nurseries

95 Lake Rd Wallsend 2287
Ph: 49 501066 Fax: 49 516960 Email: gardens1@tpg.com.au

Cyclamen Culture

What are Cyclamen?

Cyclamen are a genus of plants containing 20 species, which are part of the family of *Primulaceae*, the Primrose family. In the wild, their distribution is centred on the Mediterranean, being natives of parts of Europe, western Asia and parts of North Africa. They are tuberous plants and have no obvious affinity with Primroses, although they do resemble the North American *Dodecatheon* in having reflexed petals. Their habitats range from *Fagus* (Beech) woodland, through scrub and rocky areas, to alpine meadows where they flower in snow meltwater.

The genus is notable for the fact that although it is small, there are species which flower in every month of the year. Generally in Australia we grow *C.persicum* cultivars.

In cultivation, there are some species which are definitely hardy, some which are borderline, and a few species which will not tolerate any frost.

The genus also provides florists plants in the form of cultivars based on *Cyclamen persicum*. These are generally winter and spring flowering & are the most popular type grown in Australia today....indeed world-wide!!

Cyclamen persicum, is an herbaceous corm, with basal, long-petioled foliage. The foliage may be shaped from broad to rounded, or kidney, or heart shaped. It may be blotched, patterned, lobed, or marbled on the upper surface. Sometime the margins of the leaves are toothed. Flowers are distinctively carried on long stems, and may be pink, brilliant red, or white, or any shade in between ,often with an unusual perfume.

CONDITIONS: Cyclamen do not like warmth. The old adage was that you "put the cyclamen out at night with the cat". If kept indoors it should be in a well lit room free from heating. Alternatively, it can be kept outside on a well lit balcony or verandah out of the sun. Although nowadays people are exhorted to bring their cats in at night, it is still a good idea to put the cyclamen out - maybe under a tree or a pergola, or on the veranda.

SOIL: A peat based potting mix, such as Greengold Premium Organic is suitable, or even pure peat moss is suitable if necessary.

CARE AND MAINTENANCE: Do not water your cyclamen from the top of the pot. Wetting of the corm and flower and leaf stems encourages fungal rot. Water from the bottom, by sitting your cyclamen in a saucer or bowl of water for 10 - 15 minutes, and then removing it and letting the surplus water drain. Never let your cyclamen sit in a saucer of water permanently - this will cause a yellowing of the leaves, rotting of the stems, and eventual death of the plant. Fertilize with fish emulsion, or Garden Gold® slow release fertilizer. Thrive® "Flower and Fruit" is also a suitable fertiliser.

Cyclamen are dormant in summer, so after flowering finishes, and the leaves have dried off, keep the corms dry - do not water during the summer dormancy. Repot in autumn, and you should get another season flowering. Otherwise, plant in the garden in the shade. They make great flowering plants if placed in the garden early in the season & allowed to grow naturally.

Young plants are available these days as seedlings in punnets, a great way to start growing them.

With a little understanding you will have your Cyclamen plants in flower all through the winter months and often well into spring.