

The East London Garden Society

Plant Facts

Gardenia



Gardenia is a genus of flowering plants in the coffee family native to the tropical and subtropical regions of Africa, Southern Asia, Australasia and Oceania. Growing up to 49 ft in height, it belongs to a group of 142 species.

They are evergreen shrubs and small trees growing one to fifteen metres tall. The leaves are opposite or in whorls of three or four, five to fifty centimetres long and three to twenty-five centimetres broad. They are dark green and glossy with a leathery texture. The flowers are white or pale yellow with a tubular based corolla with five to twelve

petals five to twelve in centimetres diameter. Flowering is from mid-spring to midsummer.

Gardenia can be cultivated as a house plant, but it requires high humidity to thrive and bright but not direct light. It flourishes in acidic soils with good drainage. Potting soils developed especially for gardenias are available but note that if water touches the flowers, they will turn brown.

The gardenia is a most beautiful flower named after Dr Alexander Garden, a Scottish born naturalist. The gardenia flower is loved by many, especially Billie Holliday the jazz singer. The beauty of the flower combined with its amazing scent is a symbol of secret love, a great gift for those of us that are true romantics. The flowers that bloom, are single and only one flower will come off one bud.

Besides being an absolutely phenomenal flower to have in your garden, Gardenias are also incredible flowers for bouquets, arrangements and corsages.

The problem with the gardenia is that it can be more difficult to grow than other flowers. Growing a gardenia will take time, together with a passion to achieve the results needed. It will possibly be a season or two before flowers are seen but it is worth the wait and energy to grow one of the most beautiful flowers in the world.

