



# Gardenia- Quick Guide to Growing and Caring

## Background Information

Originally from Eastern Asia, the Gardenia was introduced to the new world sometime around 1762 by Dr. Alexander Garden. Admired for their deep green foliage and fragrant flower, the gardenia is a favorite and very popular south Florida plant. Today, gardenias are cultivated everywhere around the world.



## Keys to growing a perfect Gardenia

Ironically, the most common complaint among growers and homeowners is the absence of flowers. To guarantee that your gardenia flowers, six basic things must be addressed that are critical to proper growing and finishing.

1. Correct cultivar for the region
2. Plant in the correct location
3. Fertilization
4. Sunlight
5. Temperature
6. Humidity

### Very Important!

By following carefully these six critical requirements and the other general information provided in this Quick Guide there is no reason you should not be able to grow quality, blooming gardenias in south Florida.

## Correct cultivar for the region

When you visit your local garden center or home improvement store be very careful which variety of gardenia you are purchasing. There are many different cultivars of Gardenia and each has their own characteristics and needs but there are mainly three cultivars that do well in south Florida. They are; Miami Supreme, Aimee, and Vietchii. The first one is a grafted variety and the latter two are non-grafted.

*Miami Supreme is a fast growing variety with dark green foliage and large double white flowers. They bloom at least twice per year during the spring and summer and can grow up to 15 in height*



Gardenia Miami Supreme

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UpClose UC002....Gardenia  
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*Aimee Yoshioka* is also a fast growing variety with some of the darkest green foliage of any of the gardenias. Its blooms are approximately 5” in diameter and look so beautiful they look artificial. They bloom twice per year and go later into the summer than the other varieties.



Gardenia Aimee

*Veitchii* is a slow growing variety and is small and compact. It blooms earlier than other varieties but also blooms 3-4 times during the season. The flowers are smaller than Miami Supreme and Aimee and have a yellowish center.



Gardenia Veitchii

### Plant in the correct location

Once you have selected the correct cultivar which suits your regional needs, you need to decide whether you will plant the gardenia in a pot or in the landscape. The decision is based mostly on which gardenia you chose, the grafted or non-grafted variety. Florida soils have tiny microscopic fungus-type insects called nematodes which love to eat the root systems of non-grafted gardenias.

As such, if you are planning on placing your gardenia in the landscape, you should go with the Miami Supreme which is grafted. If your choice is a potted gardenia, then Aimee and Veitchii as well as Miami Supreme can be purchased. A word of note, despite the many myths to the contrary, gardenias do extreme well when grown in containers, can last several years in them and are much easier to grow and care for.

### Important!

**Failure to properly plant the correct variety in the correct location is a guaranteed way of dooming your gardenia**

### Planting/Soil

- Rich, moisture retentive but well draining soil with high organic matter
- Preferably containing peat moss, bark, compost or manure
- Soil pH between 5.0 and 6.5
  
- Because of the problem with nematodes, non- grafted Gardenia’s are best planted and grown in containers and off the ground
- Every two years you can pot up to a larger size if necessary.
- If planting in the ground use grafted varieties with Thunbergia Gardenia root stock



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## Watering/Irrigation

- Maintain soil moist
- Containers should never be allowed to become completely dry. At the same time, more plants in containers are killed by overwatering than any other cause
- In containers, the watering frequency is going to be related to the size of the container, the size of the plant, and conditions where the container is placed.
- Gardenias will require more water when actively growing than in the winter.
- Avoid irrigation to late in the day to prevent leaf spots
- Fluctuations between too dry and too wet is the major cause of “bud drop”

## Exposure/Light

### Sunlight (*Key Criteria*)

- Gardenias bloom best in full sun or light shade, however, they will grow well in fairly heavy shade but will not bloom as much.
- Ideally, plants should be in a sunny location with some shade available during the hottest parts of the day
- Plants grown in containers should be placed in well-lighted locations when indoors

## Seasonality

### Blooms

- Depending on the cultivar. See “*Gardenia- The Complete Guide for Growing and Caring*” for flowering season of each individual cultivar

### Temperature (*Key Criteria*)

- Gardenias thrive on 68-74 degrees F temperatures in the day, and 60 degrees F evening temperatures.
- If grown outdoors for the spring, summer and early fall, keep plants in partial shade.

	<i>Avg.</i>	<i>Avg. High</i>	<i>Avg. Low</i>
Average Temperature (S. Florida)	77	84	70

### Humidity (*Key Criteria*)

- High humidity is essential to gardenia care.
- Mist twice per day to raise humidity in area around plant (option)

	<i>Daily</i>	<i>Morning</i>	<i>Afternoon</i>
Average Relative Humidity (S. Florida)	73	84	63



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## Key Disorders Affecting Gardenias

Nutrition	Pests & Insects	Diseases	Abiotic	Other (Regulators)
Nitrogen	Mealybugs	Canker	Bud Drop	A-Rest (Height)
Potassium	Whitefly	Bacterial Leaf Spot	No Flowers	B-Nine (Height)
Iron	Aphids	Rhizoctonia	Pruning	Cutless (Stem&Flowers)
	Scale	Sooty Mold**	High pH	
	Spider Mites	Powdery Mildew		
	**Nematodes			



### Chlorosis

Cause:

- Nutrition- Minors Def.
- High pH



### Bud Drop & Flower Burn

Cause:

- Failure to follow guide instructions



### Scales & Sooty Mold

Cause:

- Insect- Whitefly or thrips
- Improper monitoring



### Root Rot

Cause:

- Improper watering
- Poor drainage

## Gardenia: The Complete Guide to Growing & Caring

Manuel Rivero.....May 2011

Available at [www.maakprop.com/library/Premiums](http://www.maakprop.com/library/Premiums)