



Bougainvillea

Quick Guide

Plant Name:

Family: Nyctaginaceae

Order: Caryophyllales

- The genus has 14 species of which three (3) are horticulturally important (*B. glabra*, *spectabilis*, *peruviana*)

General Information

Bougainvillea is a tropical woody, evergreen shrub plant native of the Brazilian coast. Discovered in 1768, today it is commonly found throughout the world in tropical zones. In the northern United States it is commonly used as a household plant or in hanging baskets



Key Elements

To guarantee that your bougainvillea flowers during the season the four key elements that must be addressed are:

1. Fertilization..... Bougainvillea are heavy feeders
2. Sunlight..... Bougainvillea must be grown in full sun
3. Water/Irrigation..... Keep it on the dry side, Bougainvillea hate wet feet
4. Pruning..... New growth is essential to flowers

Soil/ Planting

- Grows well in rich, well drained acidic soil with a pH between 5.5 to 6.0
- For containers use a peat (30%) and pine bark (65%) mix with perlite. Incorporate dolomite at 5oz per cubic yard (10lbs per 60c/y) to lower pH level.
- A pH above 6.0 increase the possibility of micronutrient deficiency, particularly Iron

Growth Rate & Habits

Bougainvillea can be grown as a bush, in tree form (standard) or as a vine on a trellis or wall. A mature bougainvillea can reach up to 20 feet in height. Care should be taken to provide adequate spacing to allow the plant to reach maximum spread at maturity. Most bougainvilleas not being used in a hedge should be planted no closer than 5 to 8 feet apart.

Flowers/Season

Blooms

- Their colorful “flowers” are really bracts or modified leaves to which true flowers are attached at mid-rib.
- In south Florida the flowering season for Bougainvillea is Late October through late May
 - Peak flowering season is November through March

Bougainvillea go through two (2) repeating growth cycles

Vegetative Cycle: Late May through early October. The long days and short nights coupled with the constant rains, limits the ability to bloom. Concentrate on pruning and maintaining the plant healthy.

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UpClose....Bougainvillea
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Blooming Cycle: Late October through late May. Shorter days and longer nights, coupled with the start of the dry season, promotes full blooms if the plant was well pruned and maintained.

Cultural Management

Watering/Irrigation

- Bougainvillea tolerates drying and irrigation should be adjusted towards the dry side
- Sensitive to overwatering, water early in the day and allow leaves to dry before sunset.
- Bougainvillea are drought tolerant. Maintain soil in pots on the dry side.

Exposure/Light

- **Exposure:** Full sun and a preferred southern exposure. If kept indoors or on a patio the minimum exposure should be no less than 4000fc.
- **Temperature:** Optimum temperatures are between a minimum 60° F night and less than 100° F daytime temperatures. Bougainvillea are frost sensitive.

Maintenance

- **Pruning:** New growth is required for inflorescence production. Pruning is essential during the vegetative cycle for the production of flowers during the Blooming cycle. **DO NOT OVER DO IT.** Constant pruning inhibits flowering
- Bougainvilleas have very light and weak root systems. They do not like to be disturbed. Avoid constant transplanting or movement of the plant. A bougainvillea can remain in the same pot for years.

Salt Tolerant: Yes and wind resistant

Invasive: No

Self-sowing: No

Propagation: Vegetative cuttings, hardwoods best

Common Disorders of Bougainvillea

Nutrition	Pest & Insects	Diseases	Cultural	Other
Under feeding	Caterpillars	Leaf Spot-Fungal	Overwatering	Ethylene buildup
Iron Deficiency	Slugs/Snails	Leaf Spot-Bacterial	Incorrect pH	
Micronutrient Deficiency	Leafminers	Root Rot		
	Aphids			

Because the range of plant form, growth habit, variety, container size, and usage application is so variable in this large genus, see *Complete Guide to the Growing and Caring of Bougainvillea*. www.maakprop.com/library for complete details about best cultural practices for producing a successful crop