

## Cyclamen

### Description

*Cyclamen persicum* is known as the common cyclamen or the florist's cyclamen. This is a beautiful plant with swept-back flowers rising above mounding foliage. The flowers come in a variety of colours including bright reds, purples, pinks, white and pastel shades of the same colours. The petals of the flowers may be fringed. Each flower can bloom for two to three weeks, with the entire plant in flower for two to four months.

The decorative foliage is green marbled with silver. Each leaf is thick, leathery and succulent.

Generally, the plant has a height of 12 inches and a spread equal to its height.

### Temperature

Cyclamen prefer cool temperatures. A night temperature of 10° C. to 15° C. and a day temperature of 15° C. to 20° C. are ideal.

### Light

The best lighting conditions are bright light away from direct sunlight. An eastern-facing window is perfect. High light will burn the leaves and dry out the plant.

### Water

Water cyclamen to keep the soil moist at all times. Be careful not to over water the plant to prevent the roots' sitting in excess water.

The best method of watering is the immersion method. To employ this method,

place the cyclamen in a few inches of water for 15 minutes. The roots of the plant will take up the necessary amount of water. This method keeps the plant from standing in excess water and keeps water off the crown of the plant. Excess wet soil will cause the buds and the crown to rot.

### Soil

A peat-based soil with perlite to provide additional drainage is best. Place the soil loosely around the corm of the plant.

### Rejuvenation

If you like a challenge, the following will help you to grow the plant after its dormancy.

Once the cyclamen has stopped flowering, the leaves will start to yellow and fall off, so reduce watering. When all leaves have fallen off, place the pot on its side in a cool spot, and keep it dry until midsummer.

At this time, take the corm out of the pot and discard the old soil. Using new soil, plant the corm so it is halfway out of the soil. Place the pot in a cool, bright area. Finally, resume watering to keep the soil moist.

### Enjoyment

Cyclamen are used mainly as cheerful potted plants during the bleak months of winter. Once flowering is finished, most plants are thrown into the compost pile.

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