

# PATIO PLANTS

Patio plants are tropical blooming houseplants that thrive outdoors during the summer season but can't withstand winters in Indiana. Plants should be placed outdoors after the danger of frost has past. (Approximately May 15<sup>th</sup>) Plants need to be adapted to the outdoors. Gradually move the plant from the low light conditions of your home to the intense outdoor light. Nice transitional areas include semi-sheltered areas such as porches or under mature shade trees. Thorough watering and proper planting are the keys for success. Most patio plants will require fertilization through the growing season.

Labor Day should signal you to prepare your patio plants for winter. Start acclimating them to lower light by moving them to a shaded area. Under an over hang or shade tree works well. Check the plants for insects or disease. Using a systemic insecticide in your soil at this time can reduce risk of bringing insects into your home. Pruning should be done at this time. Reduce water and fertilizer through the winter.

## Recommended Patio Plants

### Gardenia

An excellent bushy patio plant with **very** fragrant flowers. Used as a popular landscape shrub in the south. Gardenias require cooler evening temperatures to set the buds for blooming. Can tolerate light shade outdoors and high light inside. Requires acidic fertilizer.

### Hibiscus

Comes in a bush form and the popular tree form. Flower colors include white, yellow, pink, salmon and red. Single and double flowers are available as well as variegated foliage. Flowers are extremely showy and each one lasts just one day. Feed an acidic fertilizer 2 to 3 times in the summer.

### Jasmine

From the Angel-wing to the Night Blooming varieties, Jasmines are among the easiest patio plants to grow. Angel wing is a fragrant bush form with star shaped flowers. Night blooming has rounded fragrant flowers. Many types can be trained on trellises or kept as a bush.

### Lantana

Used as a bedding plant in sunny gardens – lantana is also often pruned into a topiary tree shape and used as a patio plant. Citrus like smelling leaves and dainty little flower clusters are the major characteristics. The flowers range from white, yellow, pink, orange, and mixtures of these colors. Dead head when flowers are done to prevent seed set. This will promote more blooming. Does not perform in the house as well as most other patio plants.

### Mandevilla

Dark green rough textured foliage really highlights the 4" blooms on this plant. Most often the flower color is pink but there are white and yellow varieties available. Vines vigorously and requires plenty of support as it grows. Blooms all summer long. Prefers a high light location.

### Nerium oleander – Oleander

Interesting foliage form is quite attractive. Has a bushy appearance or may be pruned into a tree form. Hot pink or white flowers are borne on the tips of branches. Likes a sunny spot outside and high light inside. The plant is reported to be poisonous and appropriate precautions should be taken.

### Stephanotis – Florida Gardenia

Most often remembered as a great addition to cut bouquets because of its pure white flower and exceptional fragrance. Called Florida Gardenia by members of the horticultural field because of its incredible fragrance. The leaves are dark green and waxy. Twining vines will need support as the plant continues to grow. Great in areas with dappled shade – does not like full sun in the summer.

### Citrus – Lemon, Lime, Orange, Grapefruit

Actually will produce edible fruit in a high light location both indoors and out. Most varieties WILL require pollination for fruiting. Have wonderfully fragrant blossoms and beautiful fruit. Prefers a slightly acid fertilizer for best growth.

### Cuphea – Mexican Heather

Attractive heather-like foliage and delicate purple and white blooms. Very bushy plant looks good in combination planter or used in bedding. Also does well as a houseplant during the winter. Can tolerate a half-day of shade.

### **Dipladenia**

Produces deep rose flowers on a very attractive vining plant. Will bloom indoors throughout the year. One of the best patio type plants for Indiana summers. Prefers high light. New Variety 'Scarlet Pimpernel' is a bright red!

### **Adenium obesum 'Desert Rose'**

This succulent plant produces unique rose-pink flowers. Grows to 3-4' tall and 4' wide. Prefers high light both indoors and out. Unique form makes this a valuable plant even when not in bloom.

### **Allamanda cathartica**

Available in both bush and vining forms. The bush form produces abundant small yellow blooms and the vining form produces 3" inch yellow or pinkish brown flowers. Likes to be in a sunny location outdoors and a high light location inside.

### **Bougainvillea**

Can be grown in a hanging basket or as a climbing vine. Many newer varieties are available including striking variegated leaf forms. Flower colors range from white, pink, and purple. Prefers high light both indoors and out.

### **Tibouchina**

Sometimes called the princess flower because of its rich, regal purple blooms. The foliage has a soft and fuzzy texture and the 2" blooms are clear and vivid. Requires an acidic fertilizer 2-3 times in the summer. DO NOT allow soil dry out completely. Keep in partial shade through the summer and a sunny window in the winter.

We at Bennett's are here every day to give "Helping Hand Hints" personally, one to one. Many gardening problems are very specific, and we couldn't possibly cover all aspects in these pamphlets. Any time you have a specific problem or need help, feel free to call. It's our job to help you be successful in your growing endeavors, and we thoroughly enjoy giving you a "helping hand."

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## **HELPING HAND HINTS**



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