

Pepperell Garden Club HORT TIP- CYCLAMEN from Jeanne Nevard, Jan. 2015

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Florist Cyclamen Plant

Botanical Name: *Cyclamen persicum*

Rising above heart-shaped, silver-and-green leaves are upright stems bearing beautiful backswept petals in shades of pink, purple, red or white.



Winter-blooming cyclamen plant is usually bought in flower from the florist and treated as an annual, then unfortunately, is tossed out when it begins to deteriorate in spring. However, cyclamen plant is a perennial that you can enjoy for years.

With good care, this cool-season, flowering house plant will last for several months, then can be brought back to bloom the next winter. When flowers die and foliage turns yellow, cut it back. Put the dormant plant in a cool, dark spot for the summer giving it just enough water to prevent its roots from drying out completely. In fall, put the plant back in bright light and resume watering and fertilizing. Blooms should appear in 2-3 months.

Sudden wilting of leaves and flower stems is caused by dry soil. Don't worry -- they'll usually come right back after a thorough watering. Stems and flowers that don't respond can be pinched off.

Wet soil and poor ventilation may cause [botrytis](#) -- a gray, fuzzy fungus that can quickly kill the plant. Yellowing leaves with brown patches are a sign of botrytis. Cut off the affected leaves. If the plant is badly affected, *get rid of it*. Cutting off spent flowers and any yellow or shriveled leaves will help air circulation around the plant and help prevent the fungus from growing.

Cyclamen Plant Care Tips:

Origin: Hybrids with parents from Southern Europe and the Middle East

Height: 6-12 in (15-30 cm)

Light: Bright light, no direct sun.

Water: Keep soil lightly moist. It's best to water plant from below by placing pot in a saucer of tepid water for no more than 20 minutes.



Humidity: [Raise the humidity](#) with a room humidifier or a humidity tray.

Many plants prefer higher humidity than is usually found in a home. Tropical plants are healthiest with relative humidity **around 50-60%** -- far higher than many homes.

In the winter months, my home can feel extremely dry, especially with the furnace blasting hot air into the room and the fireplace blazing. This kind of arid environment is ok for a cactus -- and me. But for house plants that have origins in the tropics, I have to **increase the moisture content** in the air around them.

Short of buying a whole-house humidifier, there are several easy ways to increase the humidity level for your plants:

If you want to do this for one room, a [small room humidifier works well](#). Use one with a cool, fine mist and place the humidifier close enough to your plants to provide moisture, without getting the foliage wet.

- [Mist the plants every day](#) -- or as needed -- with a fine mist of room-temperature water. Use a mister with a fine spray to prevent big drops of water from settling on foliage. Misting only works well if you can do this several times a day because the moisture quickly evaporates.
- Set the container on a [tray filled with wet pebbles](#). The tray should be filled with just enough water so that the top half of the pebbles and the pot itself remain dry. The water will evaporate, increasing the humidity in the air around the plant's leaves.

A [humidity tray](#) allows you to use pots with drain holes without worrying about excess water pouring out and damaging furniture. The overflow will collect in the tray where the settled water will evaporate, surrounding the foliage with moist air. Care is easy -- just wash the tray and grid with mild soap and water occasionally, then refill with water.

- Group plants together. They emit moisture so this helps to raise the humidity in the air around them.

How do you know if your plant is **suffering from low humidity**? It will tell you. Here are some things to look for:

- Plant wilts.
- Tips or edges of leaves turn brown.
- Flower buds develop poorly or wither soon after opening.

Temperature: Cool temperatures 55-65°F/13-18°C

Soil: Any good potting mix

Fertilizer: Feed every 2 weeks with high-phosphorus fertilizer diluted by half *only* while plant is budding and blooming.

Propagation: Seeds

Buying Tip

There are hundreds of cyclamen hybrids to choose from. Many are not even named, making it difficult to recommend one.

Some petals are striped, frilly or tipped with a contrasting color. A few varieties are sweetly scented. Miniature cyclamens are charming, reaching only 5 in (13 cm) tall.



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