

Tom's Garden

Blog September 2021

Mandevilla, also known as rocktrumpet, is a genus of flowering vines that grow in tropical climates. The five-petal flowers are showy and fragrant, coming in shades of pink, red and white. The flowers sometimes have yellow throats. They bloom in summer here and can keep blooming until the weather gets cold in the fall. In tropical climates they bloom year-round. Some species have smaller but more blooms, while others have fewer large flowers. The foliage is a glossy dark green. They are grown here in Ohio as annuals, unless you have room to bring them indoors for the winter.

Mandevilla plants are fast growing and should be planted in mid to late spring when temperatures are warm.

Mandevilla likes full to part sun, moist well-drained acidic soil. They are toxic to people and animals. Native to Central and South America. Hardiness zones USDA 10-11. To have bushier growth, pinch back the stems in early spring. If you let them grow as vines provide them with a trellis or structure that they can climb on. These vines also look good in hanging baskets. These vines grow best with at least 6 hours of direct sunlight.

They will tolerate some shade and will actually appreciate protection from the hot afternoon sun. A good thing about growing them in containers is you're able to move the plant out of harsh sun when needed so the foliage doesn't get scorched.

There are more than 100 species in the mandevilla genus. Here are a few popular ones:

**Mandevilla sanderi*; known as Brazilian jasmine. This species is fast growing and can reach up to 15 feet with twining, woody stems and large pink-red blooms.

**Mandevilla boliviensis*; Also known as white mandevilla. This species is notable for its white blooms and grows between 3 and 10 feet with a 3 to 6 foot spread.

**Mandevilla laxa*; Known as Chilean jasmine. This species produces masses of heavily scented white flowers and can reach up to 20 feet tall.

Dividing Plants

Late summer and early fall are perfect times to add more plants to your garden or to share with a friend. Not only is it the right time, but it is easy and free!

There are some things you need to know when dividing plants in the coming weeks. Dividing plants means digging up a large plant with roots intact and slitting it into 2, 3, or more, smaller plants, complete with stems, roots and leaves. These can be replanted somewhere else in your landscape or given to friends and neighbors.

Many plants benefit from being divided after growing in one spot for years and the smaller, younger plants will often be more vigorous and flower better than the parent plant.

Spring and fall are the best times to divide plants. Perennials should be divided in the season opposite from when they flower.

Late summer and autumn bloomers such as mums and asters are divided in the spring. Spring and early summer bloomers such as iris and peonies are split in late summer or fall. Dividing plants out of their flowering season lets them put their energy into root and leaf development.

When replanting your divisions, remember to give them enough spacing, keeping in mind their final mature size.

Plant them at the same depth as the original plant. Be sure to keep the divisions well-watered, even if the plant is drought tolerant. Regular, deep watering will encourage root growth.

Lawns

Information from Ohio State University

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Mowing Turfgrass

Turfgrass is the highest maintenance plant in a landscape and mowing is the most time-consuming task. Proper mowing removes no more than a third of the leaf blade with a single mowing.

In Ohio, most grasses should be mown at a height of 2" to 3". Mow at the high end of the range when temperatures are warm and lower as the temperatures drop.

Research indicates the following advantages when a lawn is mown at 3":

- Grass grows more vigorously because more leaf surface is available for photosynthesis.
- Roots tend to grow deeper making the lawn more drought tolerant
- The crown of the plant is kept cooler because of the shade from the leaf blades.
- The soil roots are shaded, decreasing water needs and reducing weed seed germination.
- Lush, thick growth helps to crowd out weeds.
- The soil temperature stays cooler which is a better growing environment for cool-season grasses.

Generally, When lawns are cut too short, the grass has a poorer root system, less vigor and is more susceptible to environmental and pest problems.

Grass clippings return nutrients to the soil. Up to a fourth of a lawn's nitrogen requirements can be met by recycling grass clippings. The clippings should be fine enough to disappear into the turf. Returning grass clippings to the soil is more environmentally friendly.

Fertilization

Fertilization is necessary for an attractive, healthy lawn. Fertilized lawns grow more vigorously and have better resistance to stresses and pest problems.

The number of applications made during the year is important. To maintain high quality turfgrass, at least two applications of fertilizer are required per year. You could also use a four application program.

*Two applications: 1lb. to 1.5lbs. per 1000 square feet and some slow release nitrogen. May to early June and early to mid-September.

*Four applications: 0.5lbs. to 1lb. and more fast release nitrogen. Late March to early April, May to early June, Early to mid-September, mid to late-November.

Most formulations are 25-0-3 and some will include a pre-emergent weed killer. Do not use weed killer if you are also reseeding.

For more complete and detailed information go to :

[ohioline.osu.edu turf care solutions](http://ohioline.osu.edu/turf-care-solutions)

www.ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/hyg-4031

Daffodils release a sap from their stems that kill all other flowers in the vase!

Gardenia

A genus of flowering plants in the coffee family, Rubiaceae. Native to the tropical regions of Africa, Asia and Australia.

The genus was named by Carl Linnaeus after Dr. Alexander Garden (1730-1791), a Scottish-born American naturalist.

Gardenias are beloved for their intoxicating fragrance and waxy creamy- white flowers and shiny, leathery dark green leaves. They are heat-loving evergreen shrubs or trees. Gardenias are a bit fussy but following the rules will bring success.

Select a site with morning sun and afternoon shade. Gardenias growing in containers need bright light or filtered shade with no direct sun. Gardenias growing indoors need 6 to 8 hours of sun through a south-facing window.

Make sure the soil is moist and well-drained. Keep the soil consistently damp but not soggy and never let the soil dry out. Apply a 2 inch layer of organic mulch to maintain soil moisture and keep a constant soil temperature.

Gardenias prefer acidic soil with a PH between 5.0 and 6.0. They like soil that is rich in nutrients. Add plenty of organic matter like peat moss, manure and compost. They love humidity so misting would help them during very dry weather or when growing indoors.

Fertilize every 2-4 weeks during their growing season (March to October) with a dilute fertilizer for acid-loving plants. Do not fertilize from November to February.

Cut off the faded flowers just below the leaf node to encourage continuous blooming.

Prune or shape your gardenia when it is dormant to promote branching and compact growth.

Following these rules might seem a little difficult and fussy but the end result is worth the trouble.