



Getting the Most Out of Your Blooming Cyclamen

After you have just received a cyclamen, it's important to keep it cool and to water it correctly, making sure not to under- or overwater. To prevent disease problems, it is also a good idea to maintain good air movement around the plant.

Aim for temperatures 50°F at night and day temperatures near 68°F. A cyclamen won't be too happy in a house heated much above 70°F, with the dry atmosphere that goes with it. If you are unable to provide cool enough conditions, the plant will survive for a time, but eventually it will develop yellow foliage and its blooming time may be cut short. It will probably tolerate a less than ideal location for a day or two as long as you return it to a better place shortly afterwards. The plant will tolerate indoor conditions even better if you move it to a cool spot at night. Make sure to provide as much light as possible in its daytime location.

Watering incorrectly can cause many problems, especially when too much water has been applied. Always wait until the soil surface feels dry before you water, but don't wait until the plant becomes limp. Do not water the center of the plant or the tuber may rot. A cyclamen prefers to receive a good soaking, then dry out partially before receiving a good soaking again. This will help prevent the roots from remaining too wet, which can lead to rotting.

Fertilize your cyclamen with a water-soluble fertilizer recommended for use on indoor plants, mixed half strength. Apply it every 3 or 4 weeks, starting about a month after you receive the plant. Overfeeding is more likely to produce foliage than flowers.

Dead flowers or leaves should be removed by giving their stems a sharp tug. If a sharp tug doesn't remove them, wait another day and try again. You don't want to risk yanking out a chunk of the tuber along with other healthy leaves.

Cyclamen should bloom 2-3 months. When the plant stops blooming, its leaves will begin to turn yellow and it will enter a dormant state. Most people discard the plant at that point. It will not bloom again until the following fall.