

## QUICK REFERENCE PLANTING GUIDE

LIGHT/SUN EXPOSURE	Full sun.
USDA HARDINESS ZONES	Winter hardy in-ground in zones 8 to 10. In zones 3 to 7, we recommend planting in a container so you can move the plant indoors before the first frost.
PLANT TYPE	Annual/Tropical.
PLANTING DISTANCE IN-GROUND	At least 24 inches apart.
CONTAINER SIZE	One plant per 12-inch or larger container.
MATURE HEIGHT/SPREAD	2 to 3 feet tall with a similar spread.
BLOOM TIME	Summer to fall.
TIME TO REACH MATURITY	12 to 24 months.
FACTS OF NOTE	Attracts butterflies. Heat tolerant. Great for containers.

## SOIL PREPARATION

We recommend having your soil tested periodically by your local County Extension Office ([www.nifa.usda.gov/extension](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/extension) or by calling 1-800-333-4636). A soil test can determine if your soil needs any amendments to enhance the growth and performance of your plants.

Ideal garden soil is easy to dig in and drains well while still holding the nutrients and water vital to plant growth. To prepare a bed for in-ground planting, spade or till the soil to a depth of roughly 12-18 inches. Next, spread a 2-4 inch layer of organic matter such as compost, shredded leaves or peat moss over the soil and mix well.



Thank you for your order.

Your satisfaction is of primary concern to us. Please use the following resources for questions regarding your order:

- [cottagefarmsdirect.com](http://cottagefarmsdirect.com)
- [help@cottagefarmsdirect.com](mailto:help@cottagefarmsdirect.com)
- [facebook.com/cottagefarmsdirect](https://facebook.com/cottagefarmsdirect)
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- [pinterest.com/cottagefarms](https://pinterest.com/cottagefarms)
- [@cottagefarmsdirect](https://instagram.com/cottagefarmsdirect)
- 888-593-3644
- 9960 Padgett Switch Rd.  
Irvington, Alabama 36544

### Cottage Farms' Guarantee

We aren't happy if you aren't happy. Cottage Farms warrants its perennials for one year and annuals for 90 days from the time of the shipment. If for any reason you are dissatisfied, Cottage Farms will replace your plant with a similar or comparable one at no charge. If your replacement is not available or it is too late in the season to ship, it will ship the following shipping season.

**Caution: Do not assume any plant is safe to eat. Only parts of plants expressly grown to be eaten should be considered edible. As with any product that is not food, care should be taken to make sure that small children and pets do not ingest any part of a plant that is not expressly grown to be eaten.**

Unless specifically stated, this product is intended for ornamental horticultural use only and is not intended for consumption or ingestion by humans or pets. Most plants are harmless but some contain toxic substances which can cause adverse health effects. Furthermore, some individuals and some animals are sensitive or allergic to certain plants and precautions should be taken to limit or avoid physical contact with particular plants. Some plants have thorns or spines that can be painful if handled.

**In case of ingestion, contact a poison control center immediately.  
1-800-222-1222**

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\*Image on cover is representative of the type of plant(s) in this offer and not necessarily indicative of actual size or color for the included variety.

## OUT OF THE BOX

### GARDENIA

Your plant has been shipped to you in a pot. Please remove the plant from the packaging right away and plant as soon as possible following the planting instructions below. If it is not possible to plant right away, follow these important steps:

1. Roll the plastic down around the plant and place it in a sunny location.
2. Keep the plant well watered.

Note: Some leaves may appear wilted or yellow upon arrival. This is due to the stress of shipping and is nothing to worry about. Water the plant and let it recover in a shady location for a few days, then gently remove any foliage that does not recover to allow for new growth.



SHIPPED IN A 5.5-INCH POT.  
PLANT SIZE MAY VARY BASED ON GROWING CONDITIONS.

## PLANTING INSTRUCTIONS

In zones 3-7, we strongly recommend planting your gardenia in a container in order to properly protect it from winter damage. Use the following instructions as a guide for container planting.

**Important:** Thoroughly hydrate the plant by watering well before planting.

**A**

Fill the container with soil to within 4 inches of the top. Remove the pot and prepare the root ball for planting by gently disturbing the surface roots with your fingers, fork, or gardening tool and pruning any damaged roots. Dig a hole in the soil to insert the lower part of the root ball.

**B**

Once the plant is properly positioned in the pot, begin filling the pot with soil. Work the soil around the root ball with your hands, firming the soil around the plant with your fingers. When the hole is filled, tamp the soil to remove any air pockets.

## PLANTING INSTRUCTIONS (Continued)

**C**

Water well and, if necessary, adjust the plant so it is upright and add additional soil if needed. Check to be sure the plant is not planted too deeply. If it is, raise the plant carefully and re-firm the soil.



## CONTINUING CARE

WATERING

Adequate and consistent watering is essential during your plant's first year in the garden. Infrequent, long soakings of water that thoroughly saturate the soil are more effective than frequent, light applications of water.

Due to variable geographical and environmental conditions, a specific watering schedule is difficult to define. However, as a rule of thumb, you should not allow the soil or the original root ball to completely dry out. During the first summer, you may need to water as often as every few days in periods of drought and extreme summer heat. To determine if your plant needs water, dig a few inches into the soil next to the plant. If the soil is dry 2-3 inches below the surface, it is time to water.

Over-watering can be as damaging as under-watering. Be sure that the area surrounding your plant has adequate drainage to move water away from the plant. If you choose to plant in a container, always select one with drainage holes to prevent your plant's roots from sitting in water.

MULCHING

Apply a 2-4 inch layer of shredded bark, compost, leaves, straw or other organic matter around your plants to promote moisture retention, maintain even soil temperatures and discourage weed growth. Replenish the mulch as needed.

PRUNING

Remove spent flowers as blooms fade and clip off any dead or unsightly growth as needed. Branches that have become overlapped or damaged can be cut back at any time.

## CONTINUING CARE (Continued)

FEEDING

Feed your plant once every 2-3 weeks during the growing season with a water-soluble fertilizer for acid-loving plants. Discontinue fertilizing by September 1st so your plant can prepare for winter. Resume fertilizing when new growth appears in spring.

WINTERIZING

In mild zones (8-10), gardenias can be planted in-ground and left outdoors during winter. If freezing weather is expected, protect the roots by mounding a 6-8 inch layer of shredded bark, compost, leaves, straw or other organic material around the base of the plant. Potted gardenias should be moved into a protected area on exceptionally cold nights.

In colder zones (3-7), gardenias should be grown in containers and moved indoors before the first frost. Select a room that is bright, preferably one with southern exposure. Indoors, plants tend to dry out from a lack of humidity. To boost the humidity level around your plant, fill a shallow tray with gravel and water then place the pot in the tray. The water level should be slightly below the gravel so that the pot is not submerged in water. As the water evaporates, it will create a more humid environment for your plant.

Watering should be reduced significantly while the plant is indoors. Do not overwater or allow your plant to sit in water. Remove any unsightly or dead growth as needed while the plant is indoors.

In the spring when temperatures begin to rise, ease the plant into a full watering schedule and move it back outdoors for the summer.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Why does my gardenia have yellow leaves?**

Yellow leaves indicate that a plant is under stress. The most common causes of leaf yellowing are over-watering and under-watering. Choose a container that allows for adequate drainage and maintain a regular watering schedule to keep your plant looking its best.