

Kalanchoe

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The Kalanchoe is a popular indoor plant which is quite small (usually between 2 and inches tall) and easy to care for. It is a flowering plant and features delicate clusters of flowers which are white, pink, red, or orange.

Description

The Kalanchoe plant has fleshy leaves which retain water very well, much like a cactus plant. Because of this, they should not be watered too frequently. The flowers which the plant produces are colorful and very long lasting. Most varieties of Kalanchoe will also produce very small plantlets around the margins of the larger leaves and these can be used to cultivate new Kalanchoe plants.

Habitat

The Kalanchoe plant originates from Madagascar and so does well in warm, slightly drier conditions. In terms of soil, this plant thrives in half sand, half peat combinations, which offer sufficient drainage. Mild to warm temperatures are required for the Kalanchoe plant to survive and anything below 12 degrees Celsius is likely to cause it to wilt.

Availability

Although artificially cultivated, Kalanchoe can bloom throughout the year. The plant naturally flowers in the Spring season, so this is generally the best time to purchase this plant, as the blooms are likely to last that bit longer. The plants are very hardy and although the flowers will not last for the entire year, the plant itself should survive for a long period of time.

Species

There are more than 125 varieties of the Kalanchoe genus, which vary from the standard indoor sizes of between 6 and 12 inches, to ones which reach several meters in height. Although there are so many species of the Kalanchoe plant, only a select few are used in commercial cultivation.

Care Tips

For one Kalanchoe plant, use a pot which is about 7 inches in diameter. For two or three of these plants, you'll need a 9 inch pot which will allow the plants to cluster and grow close together. During the summer months, make sure the plants get a twice weekly feeding of fertilizer. Watering should be reduced during the winter time.

Did you know?

Traditional medical practitioners have used various species of the Kalanchoe genus to treat illnesses such as inflammation, rheumatism and infections.