

Cyclamen

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The cyclamen is derived from *Cyclamen persicum*, a Mediterranean plant. In nature it goes dormant during the summer months, comes into growth as cooler, damper weather starts, flowers in autumn, winter or spring, and goes dormant again as the summer becomes warm. The tubers are the storage organs that keep the plants alive during their summer dormancy.

When choosing a cyclamen, be sure to select one with only a few flowers open. The flower stems should stand straight up, and there should be lots of buds tucked underneath the foliage that will develop and bloom later.

After you buy or receive a cyclamen, it's important to keep it cool and water it well, making sure not to under or over water. If you maintain good air movement around the plant it helps prevent disease problems. From late autumn to early spring, give your plant as much light as possible. Sunburn isn't an issue with this time of year, although you may want to avoid placing it directly in front of a south facing window.

You want to have your cyclamen in temperatures between 40 and 50 degrees F at night and less than 68 degrees F during the day. It will tolerate indoor conditions even better if you move it to a cool spot at night. If you are unable to provide cool enough conditions, the plant will survive for a time, but will eventually develop yellow foliage and its blooming time will be cut short.

When watering, always wait until the soil surface feels dry before you water, but don't wait until the plant is wilting or limp. Watering the center of the plant can cause the tubers to rot, avoid this at all times. Letting the plant drain over the sink or emptying the water collection tray beneath the container after a few minutes will help prevent the roots from rotting due to remaining too wet.

Fertilize with a water-soluble fertilizer recommended for use on indoor plants, mixed with half strength. Apply it every 3 or 4 weeks, starting after a month of receiving the plant.



When the plant stops blooming, its leaves will turn yellow and it will enter a dormant state. You *may* be able to force it to bloom again. Stop watering when the leaves turn yellow and wither. Keep the pot in a cool place, if possible, and allow the soil to become dry. Once all the leaves have dried, a process that could take up to two months, the tuber may be repotted into a container that is one inch larger in diameter than the old pot. The top half of the tuber should protrude above the soil line to assure adequate drainage and avoid tuber rot. Do Not water it, this could trigger new growth prematurely.

In fall when new leaves start to grow, water the soil thoroughly, if you have trouble getting the potting soil to take up water, add a couple drops of hand dish-washing detergent to the water. If new growth hasn't occurred by late October, you can go ahead and water it. As long as the tubers are still plump and hard, they should be okay.

When the new leaves emerge from the tuber, move the plant to a bright location. The amount of time it will take is uncertain, but if all goes well the plant should eventually bloom again.