



Cyclamen Care

Cyclamen are tuberous rooted perennials in their native habitat. They are grown for their beautiful flowers that resemble shooting stars.

Cyclamen are native to the Middle East, Cypress, and Crete. They have a common name of "Sow Bread" because pigs eat the big roots. Their tubers contain "cyclamin," which is harmless to pigs, but, when ingested by humans, can cause gastritis and nervous tension.

The toxicity of cyclamen is destroyed by roasting. In ancient times, tubers were roasted, beaten, and made into small cakes, said to be an aphrodisiac. Much of the folklore about cyclamen refers to love and conception. The power of the plant was considered so great that it was dangerous for a pregnant woman to even step on the plant. There are many other powers believed to be held by cyclamen including: healing snake bites, warding off magic spells, and influencing the affairs of the heart. The essence of the cyclamen is supposed to bring good luck.

Cyclamen persicum is the wild ancestor of the florist cyclamen. The name "cyclamen" comes from 'kuklos,' meaning circle. It is thought to have gotten this name from the spiraling of the seed capsule stem to the ground. The original species has pale to pink or white 2 inch fragrant flowers on 6 inch stems. Selective breeding has given us large flowers but lost their fragrance.

BLOOMING TIME

Today's cyclamen bloom in late fall to spring in many colors: crimson, red, rose pink, salmon, purples and white. The flowers are usually large, uniform, 3 to 4 inches, borne on 6 to 8 inch stems above kidney-shaped, dark green leaves. Some varieties have silvery marbling on their leaves. Cyclamen have a firm, upright habit and are quite vigorous.

Dwarf or mini cyclamen are popular because their 1/2 to 3/4 size makes them perfect for smaller gardens or for the window sill.

WHERE TO PLANT CYCLAMEN

Plant outdoors in southern areas as a fall and winter bedding plant. Cyclamen are a good choice to replace caladiums or impatiens in shady, moist spots. They prefer rich, porous soil with lots of humus. Cyclamen are hardy to 20 degrees F. Plants will lose their leaves and go dormant in hot weather but may survive if drainage is good and soil is not waterlogged or too dry.

Fertilize cyclamen every 3 to 4 weeks with Heirloom Gardens Blooming Plant Fertilizer.