

TROPICAL PATIO PLANTS



Patty's Plants

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6 BASICS STEPS FOR HEALTHY OUTDOOR & INDOOR BLOOMING TROPICAL PLANTS

1: **LIGHT** : Blooming tropicals need lots of light to flower. Outside, most can take full sun to bright indirect or filtered sun. Inside, they should have at least 4 hours of direct sun. With bright light the rest of the day.

2: **WATERING** : Outdoor and indoor watering changes with the weather. Outside, plants have to cope with wind, rain and hot sunny days. They dry out much more quickly (if there hasn't been any rain, of course.) So you must check them everyday and sometimes twice a day. Inside, you also need to check them often. But unless they are in a very hot and sunny room, they may only need water once a week.

3: **FERTILIZING**: Blooming tropicals need more water so they also need to be fertilized often. Outside, when you water more frequently you may need to fertilize twice a week. Or you may use a lower rate and use it every time you water. Inside, you can fertilize once every other watering or you may also use a lower rate every time you water. Winter fertilizing is very different. The plants aren't growing as much and don't need to be watered as often. So once a month is more than enough. For blooming use a higher phosphorous fertilizer. The middle number is higher like, 15-30-15 or blossom booster 10-50-10.

4: **SOILS AND REPOTTING**: When you 1st purchase your tropical plant, they are in very light weight pots. This might work for awhile inside but outside these will never work. The container you choose is very important as is the soil you put in it. Clay absorbs extra moisture where as plastic and glazed hold it in. For clay, I would recommend using moisture crystals or potting soils that already have it in them. A good soil-less mix is fine for any of these containers but they can also be very light and dry out quickly. I like to add a little *Worm Castings*. It adds a little more weight as well as micro-nutrients.

5: **PRUNING**: There are different times to prune blooming tropical plants. They can be pruned all summer long to keep them in shape. In the fall you need to prune the vining plants off their trellis just to take them back in the house. Tree forms need to stay in shape, so sometimes you have to be brave and prune the flowers off. This will benefit them in the long run by keeping them full.

6: **PESTS AND DISEASES**: All plants tropical or otherwise are susceptible to insects and diseases. It's always a good idea to keep some type of bug and fungus spray around just in case of an outbreak or just as a precaution.