

## Mandevilla — Tropical Vine with Showy Flowers

Mandevilla is known for its showy flowers and there are about 100 species of this tropical woody vine. Most species overwinter only in the tropical South. In Nebraska they can be treated as annuals or grown indoors. They can be brought indoors before the first freeze and treated as a houseplant during the winter months. In the spring, mandevilla can be placed outside after the threat of freezing weather has passed. Mandevilla is great trellised in containers or in hanging baskets.

Indoor mandevillas need bright indirect sunlight. Provide night temperatures of 60 to 65 F and day temperatures above 70 F. Plant in a mixture of equal parts peat moss, potting mix and sand. In spring and summer, fertilize every two weeks.

Outdoors, grow mandevillas in partial shade. They need rich, well-drained soil. Provide a frame, trellis or stake for support. Pinch young plants to induce bushiness.

Since 45 to 50 F is the minimum temperature tolerated by mandevilla, plants should be moved indoors for the winter. Before bringing them indoors, examine them carefully for pests. Look under the leaves and on the plant stems for insects and their eggs. Remove any diseased or dead leaves by hand. Insect-infested plants can be doused with a forceful spray of water to dislodge the pests, or you can use insecticidal soaps or other appropriate insecticides labeled for use on your plant. The most common pests are mealybugs, scale, whiteflies and spider mites.

Move the plants to a lighted location where the temperature is above 55 F. Reduce the frequency of watering to coincide with the plant's rest periods induced by the cooler temperatures and reduced light.

In late-winter or early-spring before growth begins, prune by removing old, crowded stems and shortening others. Even if mandevilla is pruned almost to the ground, it will bloom the same summer on the new shoots, which develop from the base of the plants. (MJF)

## Fragrance in the Garden

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As a gardener you know there are hundreds of garden plants to choose from when you are designing a landscape. Fragrant plants are an added bonus to your garden site. Consider adding these fragrant plants to your outdoor living area.

Photo by Vicki Jedlicka



Bearded Iris



Common Sage



(Left) Heliotrope



Spearmint

Common Name	Scientific Name	Fragrance Source	Height (inches)	Annual or Perennial	Location	Other Information
Basil, Sweet	Ocimum basilicum	Foliage	12-18	Annual	Full sun	Herb
Chamomile, German	Matricaria recutita	Flowers	12-18	Annual	Full sun	Herb
Heliotrope	Heliotropium arborescens	Flowers	12-18	Annual	Full sun	Purple or white flowers
Iris, Bearded	Iris germanica	Flowers	8-36	Perennial	Full sun	Many colors
Lavender, English	Lavandula angustifolia	Flowers & Foliage	12-16	Perennial	Full sun	Purple flowers
Lemon Balm	Melissa officinalis	Foliage	24-36	Perennial	Full sun	Spreads easily
Lily-of-the-Valley	Convallaria majalis	Flowers	8-12	Perennial	Part Shade	Spreads easily
Oregano	Origanum vulgare	Foliage	12-18	Perennial	Full sun	Sprawling habit, Herb
Peony	Paeonia lactiflora	Flowers	24-48	Perennial	Full sun	Bloom in May
Rose	Rosa sp.	Flowers	18-48	Perennial	Full sun	Many colors
Rosemary	Rosmarinus officinalis	Foliage	24-36	Tender Perennial	Full sun	Not hardy, Herb
Sage, Common	Salvia officinalis	Foliage	18-36	Perennial	Full sun	Herb
Scented Geraniums	Pelargonium sp.	Foliage	12-36	Tender Perennial	Full sun	Not hardy, many scents
Spearmint	Mentha spicata	Foliage	12-24	Perennial	Full sun	Spreads easily, Herb
Thyme, common	Thymus vulgaris	Foliage	8-12	Perennial	Full sun	Herb

## Garden Guide

### Things to do this month

Snapdragons should be pinched back after blooming to promote a second flush of growth.

Cut back and fertilize delphinium and phlox to encourage a second flowering.

Many plants are easily propagated by layering. Verbenas, euonymus, English ivy and climbing roses are a few plants that will root if the stems are fastened down and covered with soil.

Cutting flowers is best done with sharp shears or a knife which will help avoid injury to the growing plant. A slanting cut will expose a larger absorbing surface to water and will prevent the base of the stem from resting on the bottom of the vase. It is best to carry a bucket of water to the garden for collecting flowers, rather than a cutting basket.

Divide and transplant bearded iris using the vigorous ends of the rhizomes. Discard the old center portion. Cut the leaves back to about six inches.

Tall flowers should be staked to prevent damage by wind. Use stakes which are large enough to support the plant but are not too conspicuous. Use soft twine or twist ties to secure.

Store pesticides in a safe place in their original containers, away from children and pets. Use pesticides carefully in your garden. Read the labels and follow the directions. The warnings and precautions are for your protection.

Certain pesticides have a waiting period of several days between the time of the last spray and harvest. Read and follow directions on all labels before applying to your vegetable crops. Wash all produce thoroughly before use.

Control mosquitoes by eliminating all sources of stagnant water.

A garden needs one inch of rain or water each week. Early morning is the best time to water. Evening watering is less desirable because plant leaves that remain wet through the night are more susceptible to fungus diseases. Mulch plants to reduce water losses and improve yields.

For fall harvest of lettuce, radish, carrots, beets, turnips, kale and spinach, sow seeds in late July to early August.

Continue to make successive plantings of crops like beans and sweet corn to provide a continuous harvest until fall. A small garden will produce a large quantity of vegetables if replanting is done throughout the summer.

Check the soil moisture of container grown vegetables and flowers daily. As the temperature rises, some plants may need water twice a day.

Continue attracting insect eating birds to the garden area by providing them with a fresh water source. (MJF)

## Most Leaf Galls Don't Harm Trees



Maple bladder galls



Large oak-apple gall

Warmer weather has helped plants leaf out and also get us out into yards and gardens.

Looking at new leaves on trees and shrubs may cause panic to some when bumps or distorted growth is noticed. These are usually leaf galls.

Leaf galls are fairly common on trees and shrubs. A gall is actually plant tissue that has developed as the result of feeding or other activity by insects or mites. Plant hormones are involved when the pest interferes with leaf development in the spring. There are also galls caused by fungi, bacteria and other organisms.

Once the gall appears on the leaf, there is no way to control it. Preventing most leaf galls is extremely difficult. However, other than being un-

sightly, most leaf galls are not harming the tree or shrub.

**Maple bladder gall** is a common example of leaf galls. Small green bumps appear on the tops of silver and red maple leaves, turning bright red. This is due to tiny mites feeding on newly developing leaves. While it may look bad, in reality the health of the tree is not threatened. Control is not practical or necessary.

Galls frequently appear on oaks. They may cause small bumps or larger, more visible growths. For example, the **oak-apple gall** appears as fairly large, round, apple-like growths. These are caused by a very small wasp. Some may affect twigs, such as the **gouty oak gall**, and actually cause some dieback. Most leaf galls

on oak are not damaging.

Leaves of hackberry trees often have the **hackberry nipple gall**, caused by an insect called a psyllid. Elms often get galls such as the **cockscorb gall**, caused by an aphid. This irregular gall looks like rooster's combs on the leaves.

Other shade tree, shrub, fruit crop and even perennial flower foliage may have galls appearing. Treatment is rarely suggested and would have been needed prior to the gall forming. This usually is not practical. Once the gall had formed, even if the pest is killed, the gall remains since it is actually plant tissue. Many gall makers also have natural predators or parasites that help keep populations in check. (MJF)

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James Solomon, USDA Forest Service, www.insectimages.org