

# Tropiflora's Adenium Care

**Adeniums** also known as **Desert Roses**, are easy to grow caudiciform plants, mostly from Africa, which are grown for both their stem character as well as their bright flowers.

**Light:** *Adeniums* require full sun to do their best. Plants grown in the shade may be tall and spindly, and seldom flower. They are also more prone to rot when grown in the shade.

**Temperature:** Avoid temperatures below 60 degrees if possible. *Adeniums* are plants from desert-like regions and thrive in high temperatures. Protect from frost and freezing at all times.

**Watering:** Water plants frequently during the warm months, especially when the temperature is over 80 degrees and the plants are in small containers. The larger the container the less frequently you will need to water. When plants are in leaf and flower they require frequent watering. When plants go dormant, withhold fertilizer, and water just enough to keep the soil from becoming bone dry. Be sure to water sparingly when the night temperature falls below 60 degrees for extended periods. Cold and wet are a death sentence for your *Adeniums*, don't do it! Think "cold and dry" and "warm and moist".

**Fertilization:** Do it! During the warm months it's advisable to use a slow release fertilizer like Nutri-cote (Dynamite) incorporated into the soil. This will supply a good constant feed to your actively growing plant. If you really want to boost growth, especially when young, also use a liquid fertilizer with a high nitrogen content (Peters 30-10-10). *Adeniums* are heavy feeders and this extra nitrogen will not interfere with flowering.

**Potting:** A bowl shaped container is best, *Adeniums* have massive roots which will easily split a plastic pot or crack that lovely clay pot you put it in. Increase pot size by at least two inches when repotting. Springtime is the ideal time to repot your *Adenium*, that way you will have a full season of root growth to fill the pot before cooler temperatures set in. Soil can be any combination of ingredients you are familiar with, the main thing to be concerned with is that it is well drained. A mix using a third good grade of peat, a third of composted bark and a third of Perlite or coarse sand is a good starter mix. Avoid placing a tray under the plant to hold water, soggy soil will rot the roots. You can elevate the plant an inch or so when repotting to expose more of the roots and caudex. You may need to place a little moss or soil temporarily over the newly exposed tissue to prevent sunburn.

**Pests:** Keeping your *Adeniums* in bright light with good air circulation will avoid most insect pests. Mealy bugs and some scale insects are the most common pests, and any good systemic insecticide or a swab with alcohol will take care of them. Outdoors in the southern states, Oleander Moth (*Syntomeida epilais*) larvae may attack the foliage. Simply pick off the caterpillars for light infestations, or for more serious numbers use a solution of BT or *Bacillus thuringiensis* to rid your plants of the bright orange and black caterpillars.

**Flowering:** If you've provided your *Adenium* with a nice sunny home, plenty of food and water, you can expect a plethora of flowers come springtime extending throughout the summer months. Many varieties will bloom even in winter if kept warm enough (over 80 degrees).

**Propagation:** Seed grown plants will produce a swollen caudex that can be elevated and shaped to form an attractive, contorted base. *Adeniums* grow easily from cuttings and will branch and flower, but will not form the desirable caudex. Special hybrids are often grafted so the caudex will form.

**Warnings:** *Adenium* sap is toxic if ingested and can irritate skin and eyes.

**For Adeniums or other interesting caudiciform plants, visit [www.tropiflora.com](http://www.tropiflora.com)**

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