



FITZROY NURSERY

FRANGIPANIS

Ideal Conditions

Frangipanis naturally thrive in tropical and sub-tropical areas throughout the Pacific and Australasian region. They are easy to grow in sheltered situation and given a warm position and very good drainage. A north-facing spot against a wall is ideal and many paved courtyards are heat traps that provide an excellent microclimate for growing frangipanis. There are numerous large and historic specimens dotted around Melbourne, some as old as 50-70 years.

They are slow growing but long flowering – from around Christmas through until May. The flowers are beautifully fragrant; the plants have low water requirements and are ideal in pots where cacti and succulent mix should be used.

Watering

Frangipanis are extremely water-wise and drought-tolerant plants. After leafing-up in November-December, plants can be watered twice a week in hot weather. They will survive with a weekly watering in pots and even greater intervals if planted in the ground. When temperatures cool during autumn, watering can be cut back to fortnightly; in winter, natural rainfall or monthly watering will be sufficient. Over-watering in winter is the most common cause of frangipani mortality, usually showing up as soft or withered branch tips.

Fertiliser

Frangipanis are not particularly demanding feeders. Twice-yearly applications of a slow release fertiliser is sufficient.

Problems

- Frangipanis are outdoor plants. They can be brought inside for short periods while flowering, but if kept indoors for prolonged periods they are susceptible to red spider mite, which presents as a fine, silvery web on the leaves. Neem oil is a safe and effective cure. Plants should be put outside.
- Over-watering and wet feet, particularly in winter, is the biggest problem for frangipanis. This leads to soft branch tips and rotting stems. Well-drained soils and potting mixes, as well as a reduction in watering to monthly intervals in winter and spring, are the best way to remedy this problem.