

Kalanchoe: The Colourful Jewel of Indoor Gardening

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Introduction

In the present era of climate change, urbanization and limited gardening space, indoor plants have become important for beautifying homes, offices and balconies. Among them, succulents are gaining popularity due to their attractive appearance, low water requirement and easy maintenance. *Kalanchoe blossfeldiana* Poelln., a member of the family Crassulaceae, is a colourful flowering succulent native to Madagascar and widely grown as an indoor pot plant.

The plant has thick, waxy, dark green leaves and attractive clusters of long-lasting flowers in shades of red, pink, orange, yellow, white and magenta. Being a CAM plant, it opens its stomata at night and reduces water loss during the day, making it suitable for dry indoor conditions. Due to its compact growth, colourful blooms and low maintenance nature, Kalanchoe is considered an excellent ornamental plant for indoor gardening.

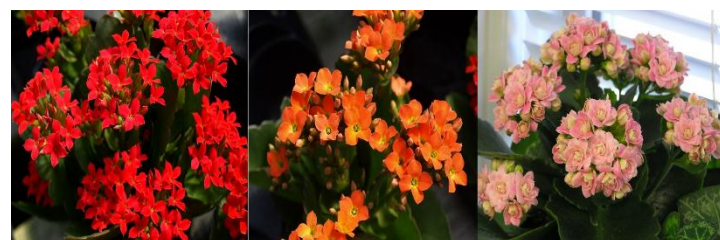


Fig. 1. Single flowering variety of *Kalanchoe blossfeldiana* (Red and Orange) and double flowering variety of *Kalanchoe blossfeldiana* (Pink) (Clemson Cooperative Extension, 2007)

Ornamental Importance of Kalanchoe

- *Kalanchoe blossfeldiana* is an important flowering succulent pot plant valued for its compact growth, glossy foliage and colourful blooms, making it ideal for indoor decoration
- Its long-lasting flowers occur in attractive colours such as red, pink, orange, yellow, white and purple, which enhance its aesthetic and commercial value
- Due to its low water requirement, easy maintenance and long decorative life, Kalanchoe is suitable for homes, offices, balconies and as a gift plant

- Improved single and double-flowered cultivars and photoperiod-regulated flowering further increase its importance in the commercial potted plant industry

Why *Kalanchoe* is called the Colourful Jewel of Indoor Gardening

Kalanchoe blossfeldiana is called the colourful jewel of indoor gardening because of its bright, long-lasting flowers, glossy succulent leaves and compact potted form. It produces attractive blooms in shades of red, pink, orange, yellow, white, cream and purple, making it highly suitable for indoor decoration. Its low water requirement, easy maintenance and ability to grow well in pots, tabletops, balconies and offices make it ideal for modern indoor gardening. Improved single and double-flowered cultivars further enhance its ornamental value. Therefore, due to its colourful blooms, long decorative life and low-care nature, Kalanchoe is regarded as one of the most attractive indoor flowering succulents



Fig. 2. *Kalanchoe blossfeldiana* derived cultivar, (a) top view and (b) flower details. (Scale bars = 10 mm) (Kahraman et al., 2022)

Climate and Soil Requirement

Kalanchoe blossfeldiana grows best under bright light, moderate temperature and well-drained potting media. It prefers bright indoor light or full sun, but low light may cause weak and spindly growth. Cool night temperatures help to prolong flower life, while very high temperatures may reduce inflorescence quality. Being a succulent CAM plant, Kalanchoe requires less water and should be grown in a well-drained medium, as excess moisture may cause root rot. Studies have shown that substrate water content, media pH

and electrical conductivity influence the postharvest quality and shelf life of potted Kalanchoe. A slightly acidic growing medium with good drainage and aeration is suitable for healthy growth and flowering.

Cultivation Practices

Light and flowering: Kalanchoe is a short-day plant; therefore, longer dark periods are required for flower bud initiation. Night-break or artificial light during the dark period can affect flowering and plant morphology.

Potting media: It requires a light, porous and well-drained growing medium. Research on different potting media showed that paddy straw compost + burnt rice husk improved plant height, plant spread and early bud appearance in *Kalanchoe blossfeldiana*.

Watering: As a succulent CAM plant, Kalanchoe requires less water and should be irrigated only when the growing medium becomes dry. Excess moisture should be avoided because it may reduce plant quality and cause root rot. Substrate water content significantly affects postharvest quality and shelf life of potted Kalanchoe.

Nutrition: Light fertilization with balanced nutrients supports healthy growth and flowering. Excess nitrogen should be avoided because it may promote vegetative growth and reduce flowering quality. Nutrient strength and EC of the growing medium influence plant growth and nutrient uptake in potted Kalanchoe.

Propagation: Kalanchoe is commonly propagated through stem cuttings and leaf cuttings. Cuttings should be planted in well-drained media and kept under bright indirect light until rooting.

Aftercare: Removal of dried flowers, proper light exposure, good drainage and avoiding overwatering help maintain compact growth and long-lasting flowering.

Conclusion

Kalanchoe is truly a colourful jewel of indoor gardening because of its attractive flowers, glossy succulent leaves, compact growth habit and easy maintenance. Its ability to bloom for a long period with minimum care makes it suitable for both beginners and plant lovers. With proper light, well-drained potting media and careful watering, Kalanchoe can brighten indoor spaces and add natural beauty to homes, offices and balconies. Therefore, it is one

of the most valuable flowering succulents for modern indoor gardening.

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