

BOUGAINVILLEA CARE SHEET

Bougainvillea are among the most colorful blooming plants. They do require a little extra care but are well worth the effort. Their vibrant colors range from white to magenta. The flower itself is inconspicuous. Its color is formed in the three bracts that surround the flower. It is best grown on a trellis or in a hanging basket.

Choose a very sunny place to grow your Bougainvillea. They need warm temperatures for vigorous growth and blooming, preferably 75 degrees Fahrenheit or warmer. In spring and summer months water regularly, allowing the soil to dry moderately. Fertilize twice each month in spring and early summer. Decrease fertilization during midsummer to promote better flowering. Prune in the fall. Bougainvillea can easily withstand heavy pruning, 1/3 to 1/2 the length of vines. This will help the plant to become self supporting as well as correct the shape. Begin to reduce watering in autumn. Keep the plant cool in winter months. Bougainvillea need a rest period during cold months to perform well in spring and summer. They are hardy only to 40 degrees Fahrenheit, so be certain to keep winter temperatures above that. During this time there will be little growth. In early spring as new growth begins, increase watering.

Use caution when repotting. The roots are very sensitive to any disturbance. If it is in a plastic pot, cut out the bottom of the pot, place plant into new pot and cut away the old pot from the top down. Try to leave as much of the soil in tact as possible. The roots of the Bougainvillea do not knit soil into the root ball. Use a very light weight, quick draining potting mixture. Repot only when necessary and in pot no more than 2" larger than the previous one.