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Growing the Mandevilla

Mandevilla (and its relative, the Dipladena) are extremely popular in central Indiana, despite the fact that this plant is a tropical vine and cannot overwinter outside. Mandevilla is great trellised in containers or patio pots, and quickly grows into a magnificent specimen. The warmer the temperature, the more it flowers!

Outside, mandevillas prefer partial sun. Full sun in a blistering summer can cause burning. Too much shade, on the other hand, and you will have fewer blooms. Give your mandevilla plenty of room to grow. Plant in a good potting soil mix with adequate drainage. Water when the soil dries slightly (to about an inch deep). Allowing your mandevilla to wilt will result in serious burning of the foliage and possible root loss. Fertilize with a water-soluble fertilizer about once a week for optimum growth and to sustain heavy flowering. Pinching young plants will keep them bushy.

If you wish to overwinter your mandevilla, choose between two methods.

1. If you decide to grow your mandevilla as a houseplant, bring it in when the outside temperature reaches 50 degrees. Examine your plant carefully for signs of insects. You may wish to use a forceful spray of water to dislodge pests, or use an insecticidal soap (carefully following labeled instructions). Next, prune your plant back to a manageable size and place it in a cool but bright room. (Perhaps you have a spare bedroom and can turn down the thermostat). Do not try to actively grow the mandevilla during the winter. It needs to rest. Only water if it begins to wilt slightly. In late winter or early spring, prune and “spruce up” the plant. Move it to a warmer location, where it will receive as much light as possible. Begin to fertilize once a week. We like to see tropicals “acclimated” to the outdoors. So, once the temperature is consistently above 50 degrees, place your mandevilla outside. If the temperature dips, bring it in, even if this is only into the garage. By late spring, your mandevilla will be in its active growth phase and can be placed outside.
2. If you do not wish to bring your mandevilla indoors, place it somewhere where it won’t freeze (such as a garage or basement), but has light. Prune it back to a third of its size. Follow the instructions above.

Information taken from HGIC 1109 at <http://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheets/HGIC1109.htm>