

Catharanthus Roseus

Family: Apocynaceae

Common Name: Vinca, Periwinkle

Climatic zone: 10B-11. To 35° F.

Origin: Madagascar; Old World Tropics

Flowering season: Year-round

Salt Tolerance: High



Soil



requirements: Wide range

Nutritional requirements: Low

Light requirements: High, medium

Major problems: Phytophthora crown/root rot, stem blight

Common uses: Bedding plant, container plant, border, or groundcover

The utility of *Catharanthus roseus* has made it a popular garden and landscape plant. Its versatility has given impetus to breeding programs that have extended its colors and forms.

Under ideal conditions the plant is a perennial, however, in most locations it is treated as an annual as it is readily killed by frost and succumbs to a variety of fungal diseases. Commercial landscapers often treat the soil with an appropriate fungicide to ensure a minimum longevity of the plant.

In areas with minimum frost intrusion, periwinkles can be planted year round. It does well in Florida's soils and can be seen all over the state growing as an escaped plant. These self-seeders are often different in appearance from those often found at the garden centers. They usually attain heights of 1 to 2 feet and are predominantly white and lavender in color. Store bought forms are often more compact and shorter. As such, the escaped forms are often the image of childhood memories.

To encourage branching, and a fuller plant, and consequently more flowering, pinch back shortly after planting. There is no need to deadhead since spent flowers readily drop from plant. Fungal disease can be swift and devastating, and new plants should not be planted in affected soils.