

gloxinia

BOTANICAL NAME

Sinningia spp. (SIN-nin-GEE-a)

COMMON NAME

Gloxinia (GLOCKS-in-ee-a)

DESCRIPTION

Gloxinias have large, oval, fuzzy leaves and vibrant-colored, bell-shaped, velvety flowers that can average more than 3 inches in diameter. Each flower is displayed on a long petiole, can be single or double and can have smooth or wavy petal edges.

COLORS

Hues include white, pink, red and purple. The flowers also can be two-toned with white centers or white rims.

CONSUMER LIFE

The blooming cycle can last from two to four weeks, and the remaining plant can last for months with proper care.

availability

Gloxinias are grown mostly for spring and summer enjoyment, but they are available year-round.

in-store and consumer care

LIGHT Interior light levels of 100 foot-candles (bright light) or more will maximize plant quality and flower development. Choose an east, south or west window, but do not allow direct sunlight to hit the plants.

WATER Never allow gloxinias to dry out, even slightly. When watering, avoid getting water on the leaves.

TEMPERATURE Gloxinias are chill-sensitive plants. They do best with nighttime temperatures of 65 F or higher and daytime temperatures of 75 F.

HUMIDITY Gloxinias require high humidity levels. Suggest that consumers place the plants on pebble trays in their homes.



SINNINGIA SPECIOSA
GLOXINIA

disease and pests

Gloxinias are susceptible to several diseases and pests.

PHYTOPHTHORA ROOT ROT Roots and stems rot at the soil line, causing the plants to die. Discard the plants and pots.

PHYTOPHTHORA CINNAMOMI Roots and stems rot at the soil line. Repot plants in pasteurized potting mix. Avoid overwatering to prevent this disease.

LEAF MINER This relative of the aphid leaves whitish irregular markings, or "trails." Pick off and burn affected leaves.

SPIDER MITES Control these pests on young plants by fumigating or washing off with a solution of insecticidal soap.

THRIPS These pests will eliminate the rich, green coloring of the foliage. Control them by washing the leaves with a solution of insecticidal soap.

FERTILIZER Apply a bloom fertilizer in moderation at every watering. An African violet food is a good choice.

GROOMING A single gloxinia plant can produce more than two dozen flowers. If the first two flowers are pinched off early in their development, the majority of the remaining flowers will develop at the same time, making a spectacular display.



S. SPECIOSA

fun facts

MEANING The name "*Gloxinia speciosa*" was assigned in 1817 by Conrad Loddiges, an English nurseryman, in honor of P.B. Gloxin of Strasburg, Germany. In 1825, the species was renamed, placing it in the correct genus, *Sinningia*, which was named for Wilhelm Sinning, a gardener at the University of Bonn in Germany.

FAMILY Gloxinias are members of the Gesneriaceae (Gesneria) family, which has more than 2,500 species. Perhaps the best-known member is the African violet (*Saintpaulia ionantha*). Other plants in this family include lipstick plant (*Aeschynanthus*), goldfish plant (*Nematanthus*), cape primrose (*Streptocarpus*) and flame violet (*Episcia*).

ORIGINS Gloxinias are native to Brazil.

HISTORY The modern gloxinia is a hybrid of two Brazilian tropical species, *Sinningia speciosa* and *S. maxima*. It arose as a chance seedling raised by a Scottish gardener, John Fyfiana, in the 19th century.

challenges

ETHYLENE SENSITIVITY Gloxinias are sensitive to ethylene gas. Be sure your plants have been treated with an anti-ethylene agent at the grower level or during transportation.

STRESS Gloxinias are sensitive to their environment and do not tolerate stress well. Anything that restricts their root growth or top growth will reduce both plant size and the number of flowers initiated. **sfr**

Some information provided by:

Ball Publishing

The Chain of Life Network®, www.chainoflifenetWORK.org

The Gesneriad Society, www.gesneriadsociety.org

The Society of American Florists' Flower & Plant Care manual

Reach "Blooming Plant of the Month" writer Steven W. Brown, AIFD, at sbfloral@aol.com or (415) 239-3140.

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