

oxalis



Oxalis articulata 'Alba'
PARAGUAYAN OXALIS

BOTANICAL NAME

Oxalis deppei (oks-AL-iss DEP-ee-eye)

COMMON NAMES

Lucky clover, Good-luck plant, Shamrock

DESCRIPTION

These easy-to-grow houseplants have colorful blossoms and three or four rounded or triangular-shaped leaves that range in hues from dark green to deep red. They grow from bulblike tubers and reach 6 to 10 inches tall. The leaves of some species close up at night.

COLORS

Flower colors include hues of white and reddish pink, sometimes with basal blotches of dull purple.

CONSUMER LIFE

Oxalis plants are perennials and will last for years, but they require resting periods. To get the most out of an *Oxalis*, let it grow and bloom until it starts to fade. Stop all water and fertilizer, and store the plant for two to three months in a cool, dark location.



O. brasiliensis
BRAZILIAN OXALIS

types

Other popular species of *Oxalis* include:

- *O. acetosella*—pink blossoms
- *O. purpurea*—pink, purple or white blossoms.
- *O. regnellia*—purple foliage and white or lilac flowers.
- *O. rubra*—pink- to lilac-colored flowers with darker veins.



O. oregana
REDWOOD SORREL

availability

Oxalis plants usually are available in the weeks leading up to St. Patrick's Day.

in-store and consumer care

LIGHT Bright, diffused light is best for indoors. Full sun or filtered sunlight is ideal if the plants are displayed outdoors.

WATER Keep the soil moist but not too wet. If plants dry out, leaf yellowing, wilting and decline are likely. However, root rot may occur if the plants are kept too wet.

TEMPERATURE *Oxalis* plants do best when kept at 70 F to 75 F.

SOIL A light, well-drained potting soil is best.

HUMIDITY Keep humidity levels moderate. Mist the plants occasionally, or place them on a pebble tray.

FERTILIZER When the plants are actively growing, feed them once a month with a liquid houseplant fertilizer. When they stop blooming, cut back on the fertilizer to every other month until the plant goes dormant.

GROOMING Remove faded bloom and leaf stems at their base when they have passed their prime. An occasional gentle rinse will remove any dust.

fun facts

MEANING "*Oxalis*" comes from the Greek "oxys," or "sour," referring to the plant's sour-tasting leaves.

FAMILY *Oxalis* plants are members of the *Oxalidaceae* (wood sorrel) family, which contains more than 500 species.

ORIGINS *Oxalis* plants are native to Africa, South America, Europe, Iceland and Asia.

WHY THE SHAMROCK? The shamrock, a symbol of St. Patrick's Day, became part of Irish history because St. Patrick, credited with bringing Christianity to Ireland in the fifth century, used a shamrock to illustrate the doctrine of the Trinity to his followers. St. Patrick's Day, celebrated on March 17, the anniversary of his death, heralds the arrival of spring.

PLACE HOLDER *Oxalis* is not the official Irish shamrock. That honor goes to *Trifolium dubium*, which is a yellow-flowered clover or trefoil that is difficult to grow indoors, so nurseries and florists sell *Oxalis* plants instead.

quality checklist

BLOOMS AND FOLIAGE Check for any insect damage, rot, wilt, or petal or leaf drop. **sfr**

Some information provided by:

University of Illinois Extension, <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/macon/palette/050320.html>

Dr. Leonard Perry, Department of Plant and Soil Science, University of Vermont, www.uvm.edu/CobbCountyExtensionService, <http://county.ces.uga.edu/cobb/Horticulture/Plants/Oxalis/oxalis.htm>

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