

Nerium - Growing Guide

Growing Nerium Oleander

Oleander

We temporarily removed these plants from our website in 2019 because we had previously been sourcing stock from Italy. These plants have been known to be infected by *Xylella*, the disease which is killing olive trees in Italy (and other Mediterranean countries) and is capable of infecting many other species. Imports from Italy have been banned but we hope to find a new source of supply closer to home and reestablish our own stock plants for future production.

Oleanders are frost tender and can only really be grown outdoors in the UK as patio plants taken out of the greenhouse for the summer. Where we have tried them outside at Burncoose in warm sheltered locations they usually do not die completely in winter but most of their leaves are blackened off and the dieback has to be pruned back leaving an unsightly and damaged plant. Under glass in an unheated conservatory they should be fine but, if the temperature drops below 0°C for a prolonged period in colder parts of the country, supplementary heat will be needed.

Oleander have leaves which are toxic if eaten and contact with the whitish sap, or even with just the leaves, may cause skin irritation.

However, that is quite enough negatives about these beautiful evergreen shrubs which come in a variety of flower colours from white, to orange, yellow and red although the standard colour of *N. oleander* is pink.

Flowers appear in large cymes in summer which may have dozens of individual flowers. The individual flowers are normally single but there are double flowered forms. Sadly they have little scent.

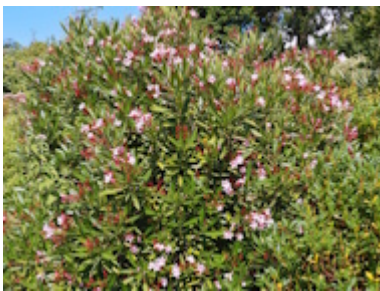
The flowers appear at or towards the end of the many upright shoots which have lance-shaped deep green or greyish green leaves.

In the wild in Mediterranean countries these plants grow into sizeable shrubs of 10ft or more when mature with a similarly enormous spread. In the greenhouse, and even in large pots, they will need occasional pruning in the winter to reduce the size of the stems or branches. Oleanders will readily produce new shoots from old stems or branches cut back in this way.

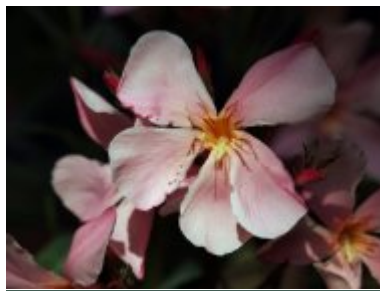
In the greenhouse oleander need a loam based potting compost, and full exposure to light, with a liquid fertiliser applied monthly in the spring and summer. The flower cymes should be removed when flowering has finished to avoid wasting energy on seed production.

Semi-ripe new growth cuttings root quickly in summer with bottom heat.

The plants can be prone to red spider mite and whitefly attacks. If so remove all dead leaves and place them outside with or without using an insecticide.



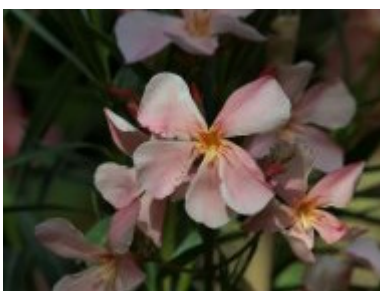
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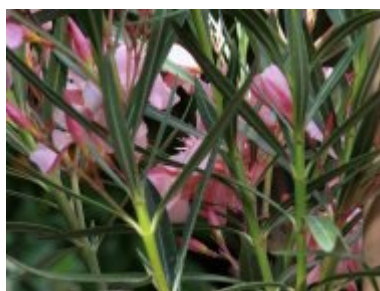
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