

BOUGAINVILLEA



- Bougainvillea is a climbing plant that most of us have encountered on southern European holidays, producing vibrant displays along villa walls and fences.
- Although tropical-looking, it can be grown successfully in the UK, provided it is not exposed to frost. If the winter temperature remains above 10C at night, it will retain its leaves, but below that the plant will be deciduous. Freezing temperatures will kill the plant.
- It should be grown in a pot in the UK, and once night time temperatures are above 10C it can be moved outside. During the winter it will need to be a houseplant, or grown in a warm conservatory or heated greenhouse.
- It will need a sunny and sheltered spot to grow well, and a loam-based compost like John Innes 3.
- Bougainvillea doesn't like to have soggy roots, so in between watering it is best to let the plant almost dry out before watering it again. In the summer this may be every few days, in the winter this could be once a fortnight.
- They can grow on frames or a trellis in the pot, and will need pruning in early spring to encourage new growth as this is where the colourful bracts appear the following year.
- In the spring use a high nitrogen liquid fertilizer to promote new leafy growth, and once the bracts are developing, switch to tomato food, as this will boost growth and intensify the colour of the bracts.