

CYCLAMEN CARE: THE FOUR ESSENTIALS

So how do we get our cyclamen to thrive indoors? It's all about the temperature, followed by ample light, proper watering, and regular feeding.

Here are the four most important things you need to know.

1. KEEP THINGS COOL

Remember, in their native habitat, cyclamen flower *in the winter* in humid, cool environments. This means that if your house temperature is over 68° F during the day, your plant may start to decline. You'll know when this is happening because your cyclamen will tell you. When the temperature is too high, its leaves will start to turn yellow, and its flowers will droop.

To avoid this, place your cyclamen in a cool location (but away from cold drafts). And make sure to keep it far from heat sources like radiators.

2. PROVIDE LOTS OF NATURAL LIGHT

The Mediterranean region is known for its abundant light. It follows that cyclamen like that, too. Place your plant in a well-lit spot — a couple of hours of sunlight a day is ideal. But remember, in their native habitat, cyclamen prefer dappled shade or the shelter of rocky crevices. *Never place them in direct sunlight.*

3. WATER WHEN THE SOIL IS DRY

Like all flowering houseplants, cyclamen are sensitive to both over- and under-watering. Water your plant only when the top of the soil is dry to the touch, taking care to avoid the leaves. Wetting the leaves can cause rot.

After saturating your plant completely, make sure that all excess water has drained from the bottom of the pot. No plant likes to sit in standing water.

4. FEED THE FLOWERS

Unlike plants in the wild, container plants must look to their pot to meet all of their needs. Feed your plant every one to two months with a water-soluble fertilizer at half strength. But don't overdo it. Too much fertilizer will produce more leaves but diminish blooms.

GETTING YOUR CYCLAMEN TO REBLOOM

After blooming, cyclamen go into a dormant state. In their native habitat, winter-blooming species sleep for the summer. However, if you're interested in coaxing your houseplant to rebloom indoors, allow the leaves to die back and stop watering. Place the plant in a cool, dark place, remove any dead foliage and let it sit for two months.

Once your cyclamen has finished dormancy, take it out of storage and begin watering it again (following the same regimen as above). When the leaves start to regrow, resume normal cyclamen care.