

## Florist Cyclamen

The florist cyclamen is derived from *Cyclamen persicum*, a Mediterranean plant. Lovely inverted flowers rise out of fantastically patterned rounded or heart-shaped leaves. Some of the patterns, particularly the silver leaved varieties are exquisite. Some cyclamen have a sweet fragrance, so take a whiff!

Cyclamens grow from tubers that are round and rather flat. The tubers are the storage organs that keep the plants alive during their summer dormancy. Plant in containers in a protected area, under the eaves or on a porch.

**Temperature:** Cool, 50-65°F is ideal.

**Light:** Bright light, but away from direct sunlight.

**Water:** Wait until the surface feels slightly dry before watering, but don't wait until the plant becomes limp. To prevent root rot, try not to water the center of the plant. A cyclamen prefers to receive a good soaking, then dry out partially before receiving a good soaking again. If possible, water from the bottom like an African Violet.

**Fertilizer:** During its blooming period, use a water soluble fertilizer half strength every other week.

**Deadheading:** Remove spent flowers by grasping the base of the stem and pulling firmly to remove the entire stalk from the crown. Deadheading encourages cyclamen to develop new stalks and blooms.

**After Bloom:** When the plant stops blooming, its leaves will begin to turn yellow and it will enter a dormant state. Most people discard the plant at that point. However, you may be able to force it to bloom again.

Stop watering and allow the potted tuber to dry completely in a cool pot. New growth should begin emerging sometime in late summer or early fall. Resume watering and relocate it to a bright, cool location.