

Desert Rose -*Adenium obesum*

General Information: The Desert Rose is a native of East Africa. It will grow from 6 1/2 to 10 feet in the wild. It has fleshy leaves and beautiful 2-inch pink open-trumpet shaped flowers. It is a succulent, and forms more of a bush than a tree. It will be an indoor bonsai in all but the warmest climates.

Lighting: Needs lots of light and fresh air. Keep in a bright location in winter. In summer, if possible, move outdoors to a sunny or partly shaded location.

Temperature: Growing temperature should not be below 54 degrees. However, in the winter, keeping it cool (between 54-61 degrees) which gives the plant a needed rest.

Watering: Needs little water during winter, especially when kept cool. Increase water during growing and blooming periods. The total watering needed is similar to crassula, portulacaria and other succulents, and it will lose leaves if overwatered.

Feeding: Monthly during spring and summer with liquid bonsai fertilizer. Fish emulsion is also reported to work well.

Pruning and wiring: Style primarily by clip and grow. Do heavy pruning after the plant's rest period. However, it bleeds profusely, so heavy pruning should be kept to a minimum. New shoots can be pruned regularly. The sap is poisonous, so clean hands after pruning, and avoid getting sap into open wounds.

Propagation: Similar to jade trees - cuttings need to be dried for 3-4 days before planting in a sand-peat mix.

Repotting: Root prune and repot every two years, after the winter rest period, in a mix of 2 parts bonsai soil, 2 parts peat, and one part sand. Can tolerate being pot-bound.

Bibliography:

"Bonsai in Your Home" by Paul Lesniewicz.

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