

Adenium Fever – Catch it!

By Tom Gatz

March 2008

When the night time temperatures warm up to over 50 degrees, usually sometime in March, it is a good time to bring your adeniums back outside. Limited watering is best until it really warms up and new foliage is observed. In the heat of the summer they appreciate lots of water as well as fertilizer that is high in the middle number (phosphate) to encourage blooming all summer and fall. Two varieties that are often available at the Desert Botanical Garden plant sale that bloom really well and maintain a less floppy, more upright growth are Crimson Star and Little Ruby. Get there early! You can elevate them over time when re-potting to gradually expose their interesting thick, twisted roots. Pot them up in the spring: bigger pots result in bigger plants more quickly. If you want one that will develop a really thick base (caudex) get an *Adenium arabicum*; it produces pink flowers mainly in the spring. Bigger plants can take almost full sun; smaller ones appreciate filtered sun. Enjoy them outside until early November when the night time temperatures begin to drop; then bring them inside by a sunny window where they will maintain some foliage with minimum monthly water or keep them dry in a cool garage where they will go dormant until spring. Never let them get wet and cold in the winter; they will rot. Spring is also a good time to remove any crossing or floppy branches. Old wood (not new growth) cuttings can sometimes be rooted in pumice with lots of summer water. See “Good Growing Guides” under “Gardening Help” on the Desert Botanical Garden website (www.dbg.org) for more information on caring for adeniums.