

as much of the fibrous roots as possible. Take care not to disturb the bougainvillea's delicate root system during planting or re-potting. Never pull on the stem of the plant as their weak roots can be easily severed. We highly recommended that you plant bougainvillea in their nursery pots with the bottom of the pot cut out. Use a quick-drain soil suitable for bougainvillea. A good mix is one with

**Design and Styling:** Informal upright, cascade, literati, twin trunk and forest are a few of the best but you should be able to make any style.

#### Species used for bonsai:

Bougainvillea brasilinensis: 'Pink Pixie' bougainvillea.

Bougainvillea buttiana 'Golden Glow' - Has bright yellow bracts which fade to apricot.

Bougainvillea buttiana 'Louis Wathen' - orange bracts.

Bougainvillea buttiana 'Mrs. Butt': - crimson bracts.

Bougainvillea buttiana 'Orange King'.

Bougainvillea glabra: paper flower, lesser bougainvillea - the most common species used for bonsai. It has shiny green, slightly hairy leaves and magenta colored bracts.

Bougainvillea glabra 'Magnifica' - rose pink bracts.

Bougainvillea glabra 'Snow White' - white bracts.

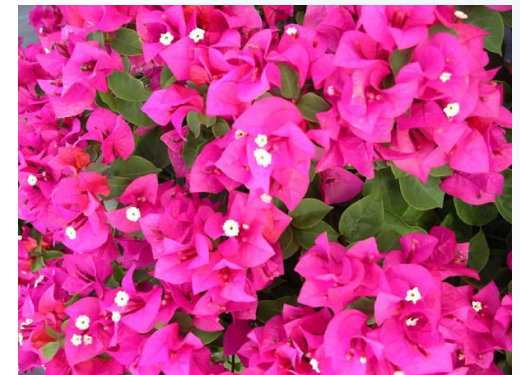
Bougainvillea peruviana - rosy pink bracts.

Bougainvillea spectabilis - pink or mauve bracts.



**S & S Bonsai**  
Steven Alford  
1024 Bonfoy Ave.  
Colorado Springs CO 80909  
Bus: 719-633-9110 cell: 719-332-0546  
fax: 719-633-9110 support@bonsaitoolchest.com  
www.bonsaitoolchest.com

## Bougainvillea Care Sheet



Brought to you by  
S & S Bonsai of Colorado Springs, Colorado  
(Most of the included information is obtained from several online sources.)

*"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever."*  
— Mahatma Gandhi —

# The Bougainvillea

## *(Bougainvillea)*

**General Information:** Bougainvillea, named for a French navigator, is a native of South America and is grown extensively in the warmer climates of the United States. It is a member of the Nyctaginaceae family with close relatives being the four o'clock and the sand verbena. Bougainvillea is an ever-green vine which is just as happy spreading horizontally or hanging downwards as it is climbing upwards, it makes itself at home in almost any situation. It can be grown as a hedge, groomed as a ground cover, pruned as an espalier, trained as a tree or contained in a pot in a variety of shapes. Its trunk tends to be gnarled. Bougainvillea is ideal for bonsai. Red, violet, orange, yellow or white bracts which appear on the ends of new growth.

Available in nurseries and from bonsai specialty growers. A good source is from old gardens being redesigned and from trash piles where a frustrated homeowner has thrown the thorny plant.

They flower most heavily in winter and early spring, but some plants put forth scattered clusters all year. The colors are found in tones of purple, lavender, carmine, scarlet, red, pink, orange, yellow and white. Single and double flower forms are available. Double forms tend to carry their blooms near the end of the stems rather than distributing them evenly over the plant. The colorful, papery "blooms" are not flowers; they are bracts. The true flower is white, trumpet shaped and almost unnoticeable within the bracts. Bougainvilleas are available in a variety of species, each having its unique characteristics.

## CARE

### General Care :

**Temperature:** Being a warm weather plant, they must be provided winter protection. They can usually tolerate die back from a freeze, but will withhold blooms for awhile. Bougainvilleas are hardy throughout the South but young growth will be damaged by frost. Optimum growing temperatures are warm days (70°-85°F) and cool nights(60°-70° F). It can tolerate cooler temperatures but will drop it's leaves and go dormant.

A light frost will not kill the plant, but you can soon expect all the leaves and bracts to fall off. In this case, the plant will regrow if not subjected to more frosts for longer duration.

**Lighting:** Full sun. A minimum of 5 hours a day. Bright western or southern window exposure is ideal. Bougainvillea may drop it's leaves in the winter if there's not enough light.

**Watering:** Sparse to light watering and good drainage. Low once established. Water regularly after planting to encourage a deep root system, then reduce to only as needed. Bougainvillea are drought-tolerant plants and perform beautifully in any xeriscape (Landscaping that doesn't require a lot of water), or other environmental design minimizing the need for water use. DO NOT OVER-WATER! Increase waterings in warmer times of the year, but remember to decrease waterings as temperatures cool and days become shorter. To induce flowering in the summer, allow the tree to dry out and wilt for three to four hours, then begin watering normally. Expect flower production to begin one to two weeks after wilting.

**Fertilizing:** Fertilize once in the spring with a low nitrogen fertilizer and maybe once again in the fall. Research at the University of Florida has found that plants flower best when given high nitrogen fertiliz-

ers and short day lengths (15 hours of darkness within every 24 hour period). Use BOUGAIN® Quick Release Bloom Boost every 30 days. Bougainvilleas like acidic soil, so supplement with an acidic fertilizer for azaleas or camellias at half strength once a month.

**Pruning / Training:** The bougainvillea takes well to pruning; a useful attribute in styling bonsai. Because bougainvillea generally blooms on new growth, each branch, as blooms begin to fade, should be cut back to a point somewhat shorter than the desired length. Seal all cuts to prevent rot. If rot is detected on a collected specimen, cut it out completely. After each blooming cycle (approximately every 4-6 weeks), trim or pinch the soft tips of young plants stems to encourage new growth. Pinching means removing the growing tip. This will create multiple offshoots, thicken the plant's appearance, and yield a more colorful bougainvillea.

**Insects / Pests:** Caterpillars, aphids, scale, greenfly and mineral deficiencies (chlorosis). Care must be taken that fungus does not invade the tree; reduced humidity and a preventive spraying of fungicide will help greatly.

**Propagation:** and branch cuttings. Young shoots, a few inches in length, should be placed in sandy soil with Bougainvillea may be grown from air layers, root cuttings bottom heat and moisture. Half-ripened or old wood cuttings in six to twelve inch lengths may be rooted April to June.

**Repotting:** Bougainvillea likes to be root-bound and should be repotted every two to three years. Repot in Spring. Bougainvillea will thrive in almost any well-drained and fertile soil. A good soil blend is 50% potting mix with 25% small lava rock and 25% Turface. It does not develop a strong fibrous root ball until the plant is quite old. Do not prune the roots too severely. Remove circling roots and extra-long woody roots, leaving shorter woody roots, which are needed to stabilize the tree. Keep