



Celebrating 21 Years!

ask the landscape professional
Linda K. Lillie of Sprigs & Twigs

Welcome to my weekly series!

Feel free to send me questions you'd like to have me answer and I will do my best to address the ones of most general interest.

EMAIL OR MAIL YOUR QUESTIONS TO:
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Thank you Readers for Voting Sprigs & Twigs Best Landscape Company and Best Tree Service Every Year!
Give us a call if we can be of service!

Question this Week: Linda, I got a small gardenia plant several months ago and all I have now is a few branches with little leaves. I potted it in good soil, fertilized, removed any rot and still have nothing to show for it; what am I doing wrong? Marie

Linda's Answer:

Dear Marie - Gardenias are tropical/subtropical plants that thrive in high humidity, acidic, moist soil. When gardenias are grown indoors they are naturally stressed because of the change from their normal conditions. Your challenge is to replicate those tropical conditions the best that you can.

Here are some hints to caring for your indoor gardenia:

- Be sure the plant gets plenty of bright sunlight, preferably in the morning with shade during the heat of the afternoon. Keep them out of hot, direct sunlight and never place them near a heat register, furnace or any other heat source. Keep your plant away from drafts.
- Gardenias don't do well indoors when the air is dry which is a particular problem this time of year when the humidity is low. Indoor gardenias prefer daytime temperatures around 65 degrees F and nighttime temperatures around 55 degrees F. Increase the humidity by growing them in pots placed on a shallow tray filled with pebbles and water, or by using a humidifier, or by misting them. When the air is too dry the plant will drop its leaves.
- Provide water regularly when the soil is dry to touch. Do not allow soil to dry out completely. On the other hand, overwatering creates water-logged soil that discourages oxygen exchange in the roots and causes the roots to rot.
- Importantly, gardenias prefer well-drained, acidic soil with a pH less than 6.0, which means that you will have to use special fertilizers that are high in acid. Gardenias will not thrive on general-purpose fertilizers. You can also supplement your fertilizer with other acidic materials such as coffee grounds, tea or Epsom salts.

Thank you for your question and good Luck.



Linda K. Lillie has been President of Sprigs & Twigs, Inc. for the last 21 years. She is a graduate of Connecticut College in Botany, an accredited NOFA Organic Land Care Professional, a Connecticut Master Gardener and a national award winning landscape designer for her design and installation projects.

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