

Gardenia jasminoides 'Prostrata' Dwarf Gardenia¹

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Introduction

This dwarf cultivar of *Gardenia jasminoides* is much different from the species (Fig. 1). Trailing Gardenia reaches a height of 2 to 3 feet and can spread 4 to 6 feet. This plant has an open, horizontal branching habit that makes it an attractive ground cover. It will not grow into a shrub as does the species. The small, dark lustrous green leaves generally occur on the stems in 3's. The leaf veins of this cultivar are not as prominent as the species. The leaves are accompanied by one-inch, white, fragrant flowers in the spring and summer. The fruits of Trailing Gardenia are small, ovate berries that are relatively inconspicuous.

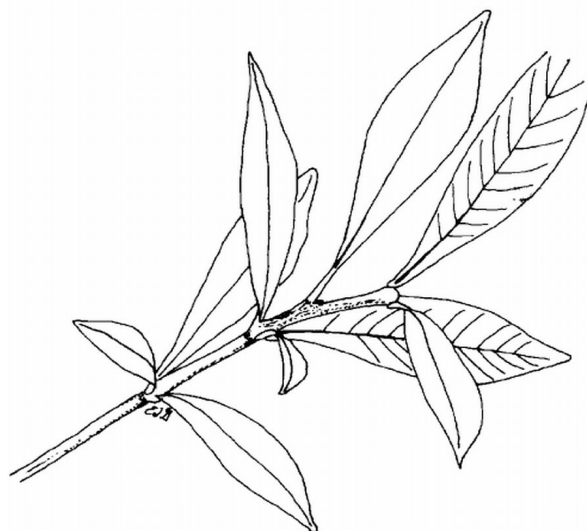


Figure 1. Dwarf Gardenia.

General Information

Scientific name: *Gardenia jasminoides* 'Prostrata'

Pronunciation: gar-DEEN-ee-uh jass-min-OY-deez

Common name(s): Dwarf Gardenia

Family: *Rubiaceae*

Plant type: ground cover

USDA hardiness zones: 8 through 10 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Uses: ground cover; container or above-ground planter; mass planting; cascading down a wall

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: 2 to 3 feet

Spread: 3 to 6 feet

Plant habit: spreading; prostrate (flat)

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: whorled

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: ovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches

Leaf color: variegated

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristic: pleasant fragrance; spring flowering; summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: orange

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: usually with one stem/trunk

Current year stem/twig color: green

Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; acidic; loam

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: poor

Plant spacing: 24 to 36 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect plant health or aesthetics

Use and Management

This plant is great in planter boxes or pots and makes a lovely border plant. It is also a good mass or facing plant for the front of a shrub border. Trailing Gardenia will also cascade nicely over a wall. It is most commonly used as a ground cover.

Position this plant in an area that receives full sun or partial shade. Trailing Gardenia prefers acid, well-drained soils that are of medium fertility. It is moderately drought tolerant and can be grown throughout Florida. However, this cultivar is not as cold hardy as the species. Plants that are regularly fertilized maintain a dark green color.

Gardenia jasminoides 'Prostrata' is commonly propagated by softwood cuttings in June, July, and August. Seeds can also be used to grow this plant.

The cultivar 'Radicans Variegata' has white variegations on most leaves. Some nurseries and catalogues refer to 'Prostrata' as 'Radicans'. They can be used interchangeably in landscape applications.

Pest and Diseases

Trailing Gardenia is susceptible to white fly, scale, and aphids and therefore requires some attention to keep it looking nice and healthy. Plants in poorly drained soil often develop yellow leaves and grow poorly.