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Florida Foliage House Plant Care: *Adenium swazicum*[1]

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Introduction

Adenium swazicum is a species of desert rose whose gray-green leaves appear folded and are velvety to touch (Figure 1). It is sought after by collectors for its graceful, weeping branches and delicate flowers that occur in various shades of pink (Figure 1 and 2). *Adenium swazicum* is a smaller plant with weaker branches and stems compared to other *Adenium* species such as *Adenium obesum* or *Adenium arabicum*.



Figure 1. A dark pink flowering form of *Adenium swazicum* in a 10-inch pot.
Credit: R. J. Henny, UF/IFAS



Figure 2. A light pink flowering form of *Adenium swazicum* in a 10-inch pot.
Credit: R. J. Henny, UF/IFAS

Common Name

Desert rose

Scientific Name

Adenium swazicum

Plant Family

Apocynaceae (the dogbane family)

Indoor/Home/Office Cultivation Information

Light requirement: Bright sunlight. *Adenium* will not flower under low light conditions.

Soil preference: Rich, organic peat or bark-based, bagged potting soil.

Water requirement: Do not allow soil to become waterlogged.

Drought tolerant: Yes.

Fertilizer requirements: Apply a low dose of liquid fertilizer each week during summer growing season. Follow fertilizer manufacturer label directions.

Salt tolerant: Some salt tolerance.

Temperature preference: Hot, tropical 75°F–95°F.

Chill tolerant (55°F to 35°F): Yes, but leaf yellowing and leaf drop may occur.

Freeze tolerant (below 32°F): No. During cold winter months withhold water from *Adenium* and let the plant rest for 3–4 months. All leaves and flowers will drop but that is part of their natural cycle. *Do not* let them freeze. When temperatures warm again in spring, water and fertilize *Adenium*. Flowers and foliage will soon reappear.

Pests: Mealybugs—Take samples to your local UF/IFAS Extension agent to confirm identification and receive treatment instructions.

Outdoor Cultivation Information

Outdoor year-round planting OK for USDA Hardiness Zone 10B–12

Light requirement: Bright sunlight for maximum flowering.

Soil preference: Well-drained.

Water requirement: Irrigate regularly but provide drainage.

Drought tolerant: Yes.

Fertilizer requirements: Apply a well-balanced, slow-release pelletized fertilizer according to manufacturer recommendations during the summer.

Salt tolerant: Some salt tolerance.

Temperature preference: Hot, tropical 75°F–95°F.

Chill tolerant (55°F to 35°F): Yes, but leaf yellowing and leaf drop may occur.

Freeze tolerant (below 32°F): No. See overwintering instructions above.

Pests: Mites, aphids—Take samples to your local Extension agent to confirm identification and receive treatment instructions.

Additional Resource

Dimmit, M., G. Joseph, and D. Palzkill. 2009. *Adenium: Sculptural Elegance, Floral Extravagance*, Tucson, AZ, Scathingly Brilliant Idea Publishing. 152 pp.

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