

Caladiums are members of the aroid family. People love to grow caladiums for their colorful leaves in pots, hanging baskets, their yards, and many other locations. Potted caladiums can instantly add color and bring life to any occasion in which they might be used. In landscapes, they attract attention whether just a few plants are grown or if they are displayed in as a massive planting. Their bright colors and unique patterns are simply fascinating and inspiring! There are few plants that can rival the beauty of caladiums.

Caladiums offer many wonderful benefits to you, either as professional greenhouse growers, experienced gardeners, or plant lovers.

To many people, caladiums are exotic and rare plants. This has been due in part to the limited supply of bulbs (botanically known as tubers) from which plants grow. Thanks to the efforts of the University of Florida's breeding program and the Florida caladium growers, more bulbs (and better bulbs) have become available in recent years.

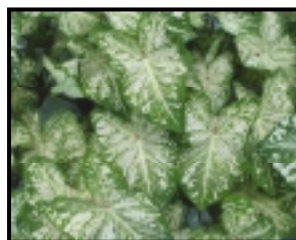


'Aaron' and 'Red Flash'

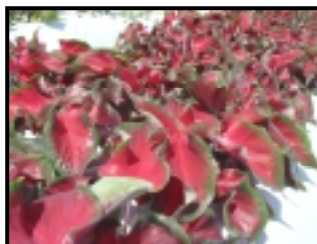
University of Florida/IFAS
Gulf Coast Research and
Education Center's
Most Recent Caladium Varieties



'Florida Moonlight'



'Florida Blizzard'



'Florida Red Ruffles'



'Florida Whitewater'



'Florida White Ruffles'

For more information visit
our caladium website:
<http://caladiums.ifas.ufl.edu>



**Growing Caladiums in the
Florida Garden**

**Drs. Zhanao Deng and Brent Harbaugh
Caladium Breeders**



'Florida Calypso'



**Gulf Coast Research and
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Caladiums make fantastic pot, hanging basket and container plants. Their beautiful leaves and tropical appearance provide a refreshing diversity for gardener. Plant types range from the large fancy-leaf types to the short strap-leaf types. Some fancy-leaf types are sold as dwarf cultivars since they are much shorter plants but have broad leaves. By choosing the right cultivar and container size or shape, many combinations and effects can be achieved.



Large fancy-leaf type.



Short strap-leaf type.



Dwarf cultivars are much shorter plants but have broad leaves.

Tuber and pot sizes: Caladium tubers are sold based on tuber diameter: **Mammoth**, greater or equal to 3 ½ inches; **Jumbo**, 2½ to 3½ inches; **No. 1**, 1½ to 2½ inches; and **No. 2**, 1 to 1½ inches. In general, two No. 1s or one Jumbo tuber is used for a 6-inch pot; one No. 1 or two No. 2 tubers are used for 4-inch pots. In larger containers, such as 10-inch hanging baskets or gallon containers, mammoth tubers or six No. 1s are required to produce a full pot.

De-eyeing tubers: Caladium tubers have one or more dominant eyes (or sprouts). When these eyes are removed, the resulting plants have more leaves and are shorter making a more compact plant. There are several ways to de-eye a tuber. A small knife can be

used to cut out the main eye. Care has to be exercised so as not to destroy smaller buds surrounding the main eye, or not to make too deep or large wound. A large nail to "puncture" the main eye also will work. The nail can be pushed through a cork so that only ¼- ½ inch point protrudes. This prevents the nail from making too deep of a wound.

There are some cultivars which can be produced in 6-inch pots without de-eyeing. For example, 'Candidum Junior', 'Florida Moonlight', 'Frieda Hemple', 'Rosebud', and 'Tom-Tom' fancy-leaved cultivars and 'Florida Sweetheart', 'Florida White Ruffles', and 'Florida Red Ruffles' strap-leaved cultivars make excellent pot plants without de-eyeing. The University of Florida's breeding program has been developing cultivars that have more leaves and are more compact so that de-eyeing is not necessary.

Planting tubers: Tubers should be planted upright with 1 to 2 inches of soil covering the top of the tuber.

Soil and fertilization: The growing medium must have good soil moisture retention properties, and caladiums thrive in soils with a low pH (5.5 – 6.2). Thus, high percentage peat soils are generally used for caladiums.

Caladiums are considered "light feeders", but do respond to low levels of fertilizer. When caladiums begin to sprout, a complete fertilizer solution can be applied at a low rate (200 ppm Nitrogen from a 10-10-15 plus micros, for example). Caladiums prefer a high ratio of potassium. Plants should not be fertilized at every watering, but rather once weekly (full sun) or bi-weekly (shade) after leaves have fully expanded. For commercial operations, caladiums should not be put on a constant liquid feed and thus must be isolated from other bedding plants requiring constant fertilization. Over-fertilization will cause "greening" of white cultivars.

Irrigation: Caladiums grow best with high soil moisture. Of course the soil should have good drainage and adequate air spaces, but caladiums prefer constant moisture. Withholding water is used as a practice to slow growth, reduce plant size, or "harden" some plants, but this can be dangerous with caladiums. If plants are allowed to wilt, dormancy can be induced resulting in leaf drop, slow recovery, or cessation of growth even if irrigation is resumed.

Light: Caladiums are generally produced in greenhouses with shade to provide light levels of 2500 to 3000 foot-

candles. In Southern states, caladiums can be produced in shade houses with 30 to 50% shade cloth. There are cultivars that can be grown in full sun; for example, fancy-leaved cultivars 'Aaron', 'Candidum Junior', 'Carolyn Whorton', 'Florida Elise', 'Florida Fantasy', 'Pink Cloud', 'Red Flash' and strap-leaved cultivars 'Florida Red Ruffles', 'Florida Irish Lace', 'Florida White Ruffles', and 'Florida Sweetheart' and 'Pink Gem'.

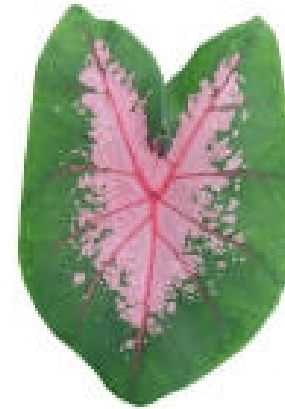
Fancy-leaf varieties include:

White—'Candidum', 'White Christmas', 'Candidum Junior', 'Florida Moonlight', 'Garden White', 'Florida Blizzard'

Red—'Frieda Hemple', 'Red Flash', 'Postman Joyner', 'Florida Cardinal', 'Firecracker Red'

Pink—'Carolyn Whorton', 'Pink Beauty', 'Fannie Munson', 'Rosebud', 'Summer Rose'

Novelty—'White Queen', 'Miss Muffet', 'Gingerland', 'Mrs. Arno Nehrling', 'Florida Fantasy', 'Florida Calypso'



Lance-leaf varieties include:

White—'White Wing', 'Jackie Suthers', 'Florida White Ruffles', 'Florida Whitewater'

Red - 'Red Frill', 'Rosalie', 'Florida Red Ruffles'

Pink - 'Florida Sweetheart', 'Pink Gem'



A spectrum of rainbow colors (from pure white, cream, pink, bright rose, to hot red).

Nice and easy to grow.

Few plant germs or bugs, so relatively pest free.

Long time of color display.