



Desert Rose as a Bonsai

ABC's of a Unique Bonsai Succulent

1

Desert Rose [Adenium] as a Bonsai



2

Desert Rose [Adenium] as a Bonsai



3

Desert Rose [Adenium] as a Bonsai



4



General Information: Desert Rose



Endemic to So. Africa & Sahara



Succulent Species



Indoor or Outdoor Bonsai

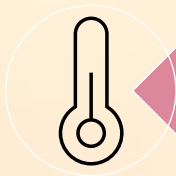
5



Quick Facts: Temperature Zone and Range



Hardiness Zone: USDA
Zones 10-11



Temperature Range

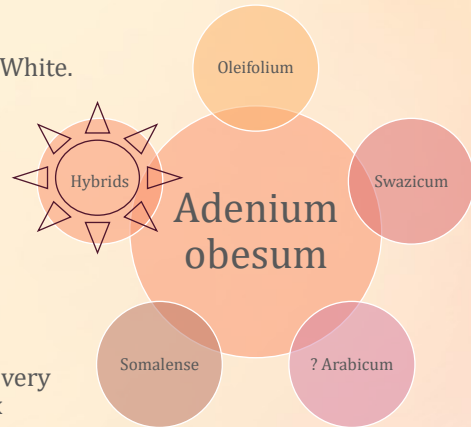
- Daytime 75°F - 90°F (24°C - 32°C)
- Keep it above 50°F (10°C)

6



Sub-species of Desert Rose used as Bonsai

- Oleifolium –
To 20" height, good shohin. Flowers: Pink, Red, or White.
- Swazicum –
To 30" height, delicate flowers, usually pink.
- Somalense –
To 10' height, narrow variegated foliage.
- Arabicum –
To 16' height, large leafed, red-pink showy flower, very popular species of bonsai. Desert like large caudex



? Arabicum may be a separate species by itself, not a sub-species of Obesum.

7

Propagation



Seed

- Easy to propagate
 - Use fast draining inorganic mix
- Takes longer to grow, develop
- Easier to style



Cutting

- Easy to root
 - Perlite, pumice, or turface for weight
- Sometimes does not form a thick base
- Harder to change style
- Save development time

8



Styling & Shaping

Pruning & Bending

9



Informal with Nebari

Leave roots and raise 1-2 inches up when repotting

10



Informal with Nebari

Pot up two inches with all roots

11



Upright / Broom

Trim excess roots to leave one main root

12



Upright Broom

Leave one big main root.

13



Upright broom

Stake to keep trunk growing straight

14



Semi Cascade

15



Semi Cascade

16



Semi Cascade

17



Semi Cascade

18



Wiring Adenium

Before

Check out Video on YouTube

19



Wiring Adenium

Finished

Check out Video on YouTube

20



Soil, Roots & Water

Adenium-Fast Drain Soil+Excess H₂O = Root Rot

21



Watering Facts: Schedule



Summer

- Water once the top of soil mix has dried out, typically 1x, 7 to 10 days.



Winter

- Water sparingly depending on climate. This might be once every 3-4 weeks or even longer.



Overwatering especially during dormancy causes root rot.

22



Miscellaneous Facts



Optimal Soil pH

- Slightly acidic to neutral, with a pH range of 6.0 to 7.5.



Optimal N, P, K Ratio

- Balanced fertilizer or for healthy growth and flowering: N-15%, P-30%, K-15%
- Bone meal can be added to soil mix for phosphorus.



Special Soil Additives

- Consider adding a bit of activated charcoal to the soil mix to help ward off bacterial and fungal growth [root rot].

23



Soil Facts: Inorganic Mix for Desert Rose



40% Perlite or Pumice



30% Coarse Sand



30% Gravel or small stones

24



Soil Facts: Organic/Inorganic Mix



40-50% Perlite, Pumice or
Coarse Sand Mix



20-30% 1pt Coconut
Coir/2pt Compost



30% Gravel or small stones

25



Soil Facts: Take Home Summary

- Fast water drainage is of paramount importance.
- Like with most Succulent type plants overwatering or a soil mixture that retains water can lead to Root Rot.
- If you decide to use more organics, you may have to water and feed your plant less.
- Particle size is important to insure a loose non-compacting mixture and helping with drainage [see appendix].
- Consider adding activated charcoal to reduce the incidence of root rot and increase aeration.
- More soil component information is found in the appendix.

26



27



Repotting Tips

- Do not water for approximately a week before repotting.
- When repotting lift the tree up a few inches to create a larger nebari.
- Trim roots with end in mind [type of root nebari you want to achieve].
- Likes a bonsai pot
- It likes summer weather direct sun.
- Desert Roses bloom when it is stressed. In summer water just enough. Being generous will make it grow not bloom. Way too much will cause Root Rot

28



Sources

- How to make a Desert Rose Bonsai: <https://youtu.be/-implM1JdfA?feature=shared>
- Desert Rose Bonsai Tree: <https://a-z-animals.com/plants/desert-rose-bonsai-tree/>
- Adenium arabicum: https://www.lifile.com/Encyclopedia/SUCCULENTS/Family/Apocynaceae/111/Adenium_arabicum
- Adenium oleifolium: https://www.lifile.com/Encyclopedia/SUCCULENTS/Family/Apocynaceae/126/Adenium_oleifolium
- Adenium: How to Train the Roots: <https://youtu.be/G9l8rf3Whu0?si=OoD9DHKAU51PNEYO>
- The Idea of Creating : https://youtu.be/qBFTBIRuhaQ?si=VsDf5-67tcYW_T5b

29



Inorganic Soil Characteristics

Inorganic	Component	Water Retention (1-10)	Drainage (1-10)	Oxygen Exchange (1-10)	Ion Exchange (1-10)	Optimal Size (mm)
	Perlite	3	2	9	3	2-5
Pumice	4	2	8	4	2-6	
Turface	5	3	7	6	1-4	
Akadama	7	5	6	8	2-6	
Lava (Scoria)	4	2	8	4	3-6	
Coarse Sand	2	1	5	2	0.5-2	
Gravel or Small Stones	1	1	5	1	3-8	

Key H2O Retention: 1 least - 10 most || Drainage: 1 fast - 10 slow || O2 Exchange: 1 least - 10 most || Ion Exchange: 1 least - 10 most

30



Organic Soil Characteristics

Organic	Component	Water Retention (1-10)	Drainage (1-10)	Oxygen Exchange (1-10)	Ion Exchange (1-10)	Optimal Size (mm)
		Cocanut Coir	8	7	5	6
	Decomposed Compost	9	8	4	9	unk
	Worm Castings	9	9	3	10	unk
	Pine Bark Fines	6	4	7	7	1-5
Key	H2O Retention: 1 least - 10 most Drainage: 1 fast - 10 slow O2 Exchange: 1 least - 10 most Ion Exchange: 1 least - 10 most					

31

End



32