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Kalanchoe blossfeldiana[1]

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Introduction

Kalanchoe is a dark green, succulent perennial with scallop-edged leaves and large umbels of flower clusters held above the foliage (Fig. 1). The upright, much-branched growth habit and tolerance of low moisture conditions makes it ideal for groundcover use, rock gardens, raised planters, or containers.

General Information

Scientific name: *Kalanchoe blossfeldiana*
Pronunciation: kal-lan-KOE-ee bloss-fel-dee-AY-nuh
Common name(s): Kalanchoe
Family: *Crassulaceae*
Plant type: perennial; herbaceous
USDA hardiness zones: 10 through 11 (Fig. 2)
Planting month for zone 7: Jun; Jul
Planting month for zone 8: Jun; Jul
Planting month for zone 9: Jun; Jul; Aug; Sep
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: Feb; Mar; Apr; Sep; Oct; Nov; Dec
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: container or above-ground planter; edging; attracts hummingbirds
Availablity: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Figure 1. Kalanchoe.

Description

Height: .5 to 1 feet
Spread: .5 to 1 feet
Plant habit: round
Plant density: moderate
Growth rate: slow
Texture: medium

Foliage

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: crenate
Leaf shape: oblong
Leaf venation: none, or difficult to see
Leaf type and persistence: not applicable
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: not applicable
Fall characteristic: not applicable

Flower

Flower color: pink; red; yellow; salmon
Flower characteristic: winter flowering; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown
Fruit length: unknown
Fruit cover: dry or hard
Fruit color: unknown
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable
Current year stem/twig color: green
Current year stem/twig thickness: thick

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun
Soil tolerances: slightly alkaline; sand; acidic; loam
Drought tolerance: high
Soil salt tolerances: unknown
Plant spacing: 6 to 12 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable
Winter interest: plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers
Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Growing in full sun to moderate shade, Kalanchoe prefers light, sandy, open, well-drained soils and is moderately salt tolerant. Needing very little water, Kalanchoe only needs one light application of fertilizer each year. Plants should be protected from frost. Plant on 8 to 12-inch centers for the best effect.

Flower colors are available in red, yellow, orange, and salmon. The cultivars 'Pumila' and 'Tetra Vulcan' are dwarf selections.

Kalanchoe is easily propagated by seed or leaf, stem, or tip cuttings. New plantlets will occasionally appear at leaf margins and may be removed and potted up individually.

Problems include caterpillars and mealy bugs.

Pests and Diseases

Leaf spotting diseases can be a problem under humid conditions.