

agriculture,
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Anthurium - Flamingo

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Family: Araceae
Genus: *Anthurium*
Species: *andreaeanum*
African names: Flamingo, Painted tongue, Pigtail plant

Background

1.1 Origin

Anthurium (flamingo flower) is a plant that produces beautifully coloured spathe and a tail like spike. *Anthurium* flower is originally from South America. The *anthurium* name is derived from the Greek words 'Anthos' which means 'flowering' and 'Oura' meaning 'tail'. The diversity in varieties has been greatly increased in recent years through breeding and selection. *Anthurium* is currently having more than 100 commercial varieties, all protected by breeding property rights.

Anthurium flower is produced in Krugersdorp around Gauteng Province in South Africa with their open, heart-shaped flowers and tropical disposition.

1.2 Temperature and soil requirements

1.2.1 TEMPERATURE

Anthurium flowers grow best with day temperatures of 25 to 32 0C and night temperatures of 21 to 24 0C. A high temperature will result in drying of the foliage and flowers and finally ends with the fading of the plant. Night temperatures of between 4 to 10 0C can result in slow growth and yellowing of lower leaves. A temperature below 16 0C will kill the plant. It is also be affected by temperature above 32 0C.

Trees such as pine can be planted to serve as windbreak of *anthurium* flowers. *Anthurium* prefers bright shaded light as direct sun can burn the plant. If the light intensity is too low, the plant won't flower and the leaves will become distorted.

1.2.2 SOIL REQUIREMENTS

Anthurium prefers a growing medium that is well drained and coarse-textured as well as more organic soil that has good water holding capacity and good drainage. It can withstand sandy loam to clay soils. Peat moss, coconut husk, brick pieces, pine bark and perlite are used along with the soil as growing medium.

Cultural practices

2.1 Soil preparation

Firstly existing vegetation should be killed by pre-emergence herbicides, removed or smothered before beginning to work on the soil or loosen the soil and prepare the flower bed area for planting anthurium flowers. This can be done with a tiller or by hand using a spade and garden fork. If the soil is very compacted or has never been tilled, a tractor can be hired to do the initial passes. Thereafter, a lightweight tiller or a spade should be sufficient. After the first year, the soil should not be tilled again.

Soil should be loosened down at least 25 cm before planting anthurium flower. Thereafter big clods should be broken up, remove larger rocks and any roots.

2.2 Propagation

Anthurium flower can be propagated in a form of two methods such as vegetative reproduction and seeds. Anthurium plants can also be reproduced by tissue culture. The easier methods of propagating anthurium flower are by stem cuttings, layering and division of offsets or suckers that sprout laterally from the base of the plant.

2.3 Planting

The best time of planting anthurium is from late autumn to early winter. Anthurium flowers should be planted in raised beds of 1.3 to 2 m wide and 5 cm deep. Anthurium flowers should not be planted more than 5 cm deep, as deep planting results in rotting of stems and roots. Anthurium flower plant should be staked after planting for support. Mulching is needed for anthurium plant. Anthurium plant roots grow into the mulch and spread.



2.4 Fertilization

Anthurium flower should be fertilized every other month. Liquid fertilizer should be used throughout the growing period. A light solution of a 3:1:2 fertilizer ratio should be used and it is probably best to dilute to ¼ strength.

2.5 Irrigation

Compost should be kept moist at all times, but not drenched. *Anthurium* flower should be irrigated immediately after planting. *Anthurium* flower should also be irrigated thoroughly, but it should be allowed to dry slightly between irrigation times. Over irrigation of *anthurium* flower should be avoided as it may cause root damage and yellowing of the leaves.

Too much drying of the plant will cease the plant growth and burns the tip of the plant. *Flamingo* flower prefers a winter rest at 15 °C for about 6 weeks with little water. It helps plant to bloom profusely in the next season.

2.6 Weed control

The common weeds when growing *anthurium* flower are chickweed, fireweed, bittercress, *drymera*, ferns, broad leaved weeds and grasses. Preferably registered chemicals should be used for effective weed control.

2.7 Pest and disease control

2.7.1 PESTS

Anthurium flowers are susceptible to pests that such as aphids, scales, spider mite, mealybugs and thrips.

Thrips and mealybugs are found on new growth. Aphids feed on the flower buds. Symptoms of *anthurium* flower that infested by aphids include yellowing, distortion of leaves and poor growth. Scales seem to be particularly fond of the tough bird nest type. Symptoms of *anthurium* flower that infested by scale insects include infested stems and leaves.

Control measures

There are some “insecticidal soaps” which work well on the soft insects, but scales may need stronger insecticide. The best method of insect control is to monitor anthurium flower and treat it before the insect get out of hand. One of the best ways to stay clear of the use of chemicals is with periodic wiping of the foliage and a gentle spray using water.

2.7.2 FUNGAL DISEASE: RHIZOCTINIA

The biggest disease problem that infects anthurium flower is rhizoctinia. The rhizoctinia is caused by high temperature and humidity coupled with soil that is poorly drained. Over watering should be avoided and if anthurium flower is replanted, a well drained soil should be used in order to prevent rhizoctinia disease. Rhizoctinia can also be controlled by a wide range of fungicides chemicals. The best approach is prevention via cultural practices. The symptoms of rhizoctonia disease include falling of anthurium flowers' tree especially during rainy season.

2.8 Harvesting methods

Anthurium flowers are generally harvested when the spadix is almost fully developed. Flowers picked too early wilt quickly. Development of true flowers on spadix is also used as a criterion for determining the harvest stage. The anthurium flowers are harvested after the unfolding of the spathe is completed.

Anthurium flowers are best harvested in the morning. The anthurium flowers are harvested by hand using sharp secateur scissor. About 8 - 12 flowers per plant are obtained annually.

Uses

Anthurium flower is highly grown as a decorative flower for a wedding reception, a special event and birthday parties.

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www.flowerexpert.com / www.flowerite.co.za



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