



Bat Flower

Tacca chantrieri, or Bat Flower, is a dramatic and exotic plant native to the jungle regions of Southeast Asia. When growing the Bat Flower it is important to keep in mind that you're trying to recreate the jungle-like environment in which it thrives.

- ☼ *Tacca* is hardy outdoors in zones 10 and 11. This means that most of us in North America will need to protect the plant when night time temperatures dip below 55 degrees Fahrenheit.
- ☼ The Bat Flower can be a finicky plant when it is grown out of its native region. Many gardeners and tropical plant enthusiasts choose to grow it as a container plant because it allows them greater control over its growing conditions.
- ☼ Choose a container that is at least 10" in diameter. The plant will grow quite large in one season and a larger pot will provide stability and prevent it from tipping over.
- ☼ Plant only one bulb per pot. Bat Flowers are heavy feeders and drinkers and will compete with each other for fertilizer and water if they are planted too closely.
- ☼ Use a light well-draining potting mix. Some experts recommend using an "orchid mix" because these specialty mixes are very well draining. Remember, while the plant needs to have well-draining soil to avoid rotting the bulb, it will still need copious amounts of water throughout the summer season to achieve its full height.
- ☼ Place your plant in a bright location where it will not receive any direct sunlight, this is called "bright shade." Avoid locations that are too dark and shady because it will impede blooming.

- ☼ Keep the plant protected from drying winds. If you live in a dry region of the country promote high levels of humidity around the plant. Set out shallow pans of water that will evaporate and boost the humidity in the air right around the plant.
- ☼ Use a balanced liquid fertilizer every other week.
- ☼ In late summer or early fall begin to withhold water and fertilizer. This will encourage the plant to go into dormancy.
- ☼ When the leaves have turned yellow and died back they can be removed and the bulb can be brought inside in its pot. Be sure that it is inside before nighttime temperatures dip below 55 degrees Fahrenheit.
- ☼ Store it in a warm, dark, dry place; a laundry room or pantry would be perfect. Do not water the plant, but do not allow it to become bone dry. A light spritz of water once a month should be enough.
- ☼ In spring, two to three weeks before average nighttime temperatures are expected to remain above 55, move the Bat Flower to a sunny window and bring it out of dormancy by watering it. Start off slowly with just a little bit of water and gradually increase the amounts of water as the foliage begins to grow.
- ☼ Move the plant back outdoors when there is no danger of cold temperatures.

