

Gardenia

Gardenia jasminoides 'Chuck Hayes'

Gardenias may not be low-maintenance plants, but many southern gardeners think they're worth the effort. There are over 200 species of gardenias but in Florida varieties of the species *Gardenia jasminoides* are used almost exclusively. Variety 'Chuck Hayes' is well known for its heat tolerance and cold hardiness. Gardenias do not tolerate coastal conditions or water with high salts (e.g., water from water softeners, irrigation water from certain reclaimed water systems, or salt-intruded wells). An acidic soil pH between 5.0 and 6.5 is required or their foliage will yellow. Gardenias are toxic to dogs, cats and horses when ingested.

Type: evergreen shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 8 through 11

Uses: border; container or above-ground planter; accent; screen

Origin: not native to Florida

Height: 4-6 feet **Spread:** 3-4 feet

Plant spacing: 4 feet

Light requirement: full sun to part shade

Soil tolerances: best in well-drained, rich, acid soil

Drought tolerance: high

Soil salt tolerances: low

Invasive potential: low

Pest resistance: mealybugs, aphids, scales and whiteflies are all problematic

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Photo: UF/ IFAS