

4 Desert Rose Winter Care Tips

Brrr brrr... the cold wind is blowing by. Winter is fast approaching and you want to take the best care of your lovely adenium. Among all the other species, *Adenium Multiflorum* and *Adenium Swazicum* are two of the most cold-hardy adenium. The popular *Obesum* and *Arabicum* don't really take the cold weather very well.

With that said, all of them still need to be watched closely through the cold winter months because frost might damage them. There are a few key points you should keep in mind. Let's put our coats on & check them out right below.

Going Into Dormancy

Most adenium varieties will show signs of them going into dormancy as fall approaches, regardless of the conditions. This could be a sudden yellowing and partial or total dropping of the leaves. Or the slowing down of branch growth.

Some weeks before the yellowing-n-dropping, you may notice a significant decrease in water consumption. So water them sparingly at this time as winter comes close. If however you see the stem tips are still pushing out new leaves, then keep watering them as normal.

The timing and length of dormancy varies among different varieties, and even among clones of the same variety in different environments from year to year. So recognizing that your plants are going into 'sleep mode' can help tremendously for their winter care.

Adenium variety	Some dormancy signs
Boehmianum, Swazicum	Defoliation
Somalense, Arabicum	Slowing stem growth

Near the end of December 2020, a reader shared with us: *We live in BAJA IN THE WINTER. DOES THE DESERT ROSE GO DORMANT AT THAT TIME? THE LEAVES SEEM TO GO YELLOW AND FALL OFF.*

Based on their description, this is definitely a signal it's going dormant. And in the US, you can overwinter the plants from November to April in the garage, the basement or in a greenhouse.

1. Overwinter Your Desert Roses

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(10\)/adenium-swazicum-in-winter.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(10)/adenium-swazicum-in-winter.jpg)

If the outside is not too cold, you could overwinter your desert roses outdoors. Placing the adenium in places with absolutely no frost or somewhere bone-dry will help.

Try placing them against a wall or under a roof cover like your porch roof. The heat trapped by the wall could help keep the plants warmer. Make sure no rain or water gets into contact with your plants.

It is okay at this point just to let your adenium go dormant. Cold winter nights trigger the dropping of the leaves. You can also force this by cutting off the leaves. If temperatures hit under the 20s F (-6C), you should move your plants indoors or cover them with at least two layers of covers.

If you want to cover your plants, try using a plastic drape and wrap it gently around the plants. Suspend the layers over the plants to keep them warm. Place some stones or bricks on the drape so the wind won't blow them away.

Warm Plant Cover

<https://amzn.to/37sLwQR>

After keeping them warm, we can then look to watering for our desert roses in the winter:

2. Water for Your Adenium During Winter

If you've already overwintered your plants with temperatures of 50F (10C) or above then you should keep the plants absolutely dry until the weather warms up and the plants begin showing signs of growth.

This may be in spring, April or May. Then you can begin watering your plants again. Remember to thoroughly drench the soil to avoid any salt buildups, especially in terracotta pots. And don't water too much too soon or over-pot them, because it might cause root rot.

If you have a small plant in a smaller pot, you may only need to water it once a month or none at all during the dormancy period. Bigger, leafless plants don't really need extra water because their caudex—the water storage part—will have enough for them to survive the cold months. You could water it as little as once per month.

3. Indoor Care for Your Desert Rose

If the outdoor temperatures in your local area are too extreme for the plants, take them indoors before the winter hits. If you do so, make sure the indoor temperatures are from 55F (13C) and above. Some varieties like Obesum, Swazicum and their hybrids can be kept active during the winter at temperatures above 50F (10C).

Light is not essential for the adenium during dormancy. However some winter bloomers like the Somalense and Multiflorum may not flower in low light condition. Because of the low light condition, some may grow spindly (or leggy) branches in the winter.

If your plants haven't gone dormant at this time, you may want to force it to do so. By not watering it for some time, the leaves will begin to turn yellow & drop, and the plants will begin to "fall asleep" during the winter months.

4. Post-Frost Care & The End of Dormancy

If some of the branches are affected by frost, you can prune them back in spring or when the weather gets warmer. When left frozen, the stems might rot and might eventually affect the whole plant.

After winter is over, replant your desert roses into a [nice, nutrient-rich adenium soil mix](#). And remember not to over-pot (plant them in a too large pot). Give them a comfortable pot to live in and lots of sunlight gradually.

When the overwintered plants get their first sunlight again, their foliage may scorch (get sunburned). This is not a big issue however because new, sun-adapted leaves will grow out soon.

Watch for the sprouting leaves and buds. And increase the watering frequency gradually into full growth. Your plants will begin growing and blooming happily again.

Warm & Happy Desert Roses

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(10\)/adenium-after-winter.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(10)/adenium-after-winter.jpg)

These are a few key points you should keep in mind when taking care of your adenium in the winter. You can overwinter your plants outdoors or indoors. Make sure to give them warm, protective covers with at least two layers.

During the dormancy period, keep your plants bone dry. Excess water with little sunlight might lead to rotting. For smaller plants, we may just need to water them once a month or none at all. If your adenium roses branches have been frozen, wait until spring to prune or cut them off.

Here's a simple guide on pruning desert roses:

[How to prune desert roses](#)

After pruning, replant your babies into a good, healthy soil mix and give it lots of sunlight. The plants will begin growing happily again.

Hope this brief post was helpful to you. If you have any questions, please let us know. And as always, happy gardening. Be well.

Credits:

- [Mark A. Dimmitt](#)