Common Name: Oleander

Scientific Name: *Nerium oleander*

Order: Gentianales

Family: Gentianales

**Description**
Oleanders are a fast-developing, dicot, evergreen, perennial shrub that can range to 20 feet tall, but its owners usually keep it trimmed down to about 6-10 feet tall. It is a strong, multipurpose plant that produces eye-catching summertime flowers in white, red, pink, salmon, and light yellow. Rubbery, lance shaped leaves grow around 4-10 inches. This depends on which variety is planted, but all leaves will be a bright green. The leaf sizes vary due to sunlight conditions and the time it was produced. Larger leaves will be produced under more cloudy conditions instead of under a more sunshine habitat, and this varies between the varieties.

**Growth Habit**
Oleanders grow in upright manner that forms a rounded mound producing trees and shrubs. They are prone to become overgrown, so they should be pruned regularly or when needed to maintain their rounded shape. They produce bright flowers that are dilutions of pink. They have the ability to flower throughout the year even in a greenhouse or partial shade, but depending on their blooming period, outside of a greenhouse, the oleanders will bloom off and on yearly. Each variety differs a little in some way.

**Hardiness Zone(s)**
Oleander’s recommended for USDA Zones 8-10. Places like Florida and the Gulf Coast can easily grow oleander due to their humid climates. Although it can survive some frost temperatures (15-20°F) the foliage will be damaged. Some verities will not experience damage, but others will undergo damage due to the tiny differences in each variety.

**Culture**
This type of plant likes to have bright sun, but some shade is accepted by it. Oleanders are very versatile when dealing with moisture. They can survive in both dry and wet soils, but it strives when moisturized during a time of drought. They are very low natured plants.

**Diseases & Insects**
They have no serious disease or bug problems. In humid climates watch for aphids and scale may cause problems. Also, if attacked by a caterpillar the plant can be completely stripped in a matter of days. If a leave is damaged just remove it from the plant.
Landscape Value
Oleanders have a wide range of uses. Being known for their abundant, fragrant, summer to fall flowers, they are utilized for screen, informal hedges, colorful accents, beach paintings, and cityscapes. They can also be formed into a small tree by removing suckers and leaving just a small number of stems. These trees are very attractive to the human eye. They are highly appropriate for container gardens, and they are an exemplary choice for brightening up a greenhouse or conservatory. For example, in Orlando, Florida, Interstate 4 is lined with oleanders to give travelers a beautiful view while stuck in traffic or on their morning commute. Plus, the fact that they can survive through all the sunlight and car exhaust is a testament to their durability. This plant is also very toxic to humans and pets. It is not made for digestion, but solely for admiration.

References

