

Mandevillas and Dipladenias

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If you already have *Bougainvillea* in your garden and would like something different as a climber, something exotic, why not try *Mandevillas* and *Dipladenias*?

In the right position, these climbers from Central and South America will give you as much colour as *Bougainvilleas* but with less mess.

The *Dipladenia sanderi*, or *Mandevilla sanderi* as it is officially called, is a shrubby climber that can grow up to 4.5 metres high if the climate is warm.

Here in the Algarve you can expect it to grow to about two to three metres. The flowers are pink, red or white with a yellow throat and keep appearing throughout the year, although somewhat less in the winter.

It can be planted in sun or half

shade and likes a rich but very well drained soil.

People generally think that *Dipladenias* and *Mandevillas* need plenty of water. Actually, they like to dry out between watering. In the summer, twice a week is enough.

Also avoid watering when the sun hits the leaves as they easily burn. It is best to water them at the end of the day.

To keep the flowers going, feed them regularly with an appropriate feed for flowering plants.

Another type is the *Dipladenia boliviensis*, which has white flowers with a yellow throat from spring until autumn. This type will also grow to about two metres in height in the Algarve.

Mandevilla splendens is a climber that grows to about three metres. It has big pink flowers that



Mandevilla sanderi

are most abundant in the summer and if planted in a warm and sheltered area might produce some flowers at other times of the year as well.

Very commonly sold is a similar *Mandevilla* called *Mandevilla x amoena* "Alice du Pont". This plant can grow to six metres high and usually has big pink flowers, although nowadays more hybrids are available in white or a beautiful rich red. A *Dipladenia* with the same red colour and red throat is also available and is really stunning to see.

Commonly called a *Yellow Mandevilla* or *Yellow Dipladenia* is the *Urechites lutea*, a close relative that has bright neon yellow flowers about five centimeters across.

It is a native of Florida and flowers from June until October.

Now, how do you distinguish a *Dipladenia* from a *Mandevilla*? Some

people will call them all *Mandevilla* but *Dipladenias* are shrubbier than *Mandevillas* and also have a smaller flower. *Dipladenias* are also a bit harder than *Mandevillas*.

They can all suffer from insects like scales and mealybugs so keep an eye out for these and deal with them as soon as they appear.

A little warning: *Dipladenias* and *Mandevillas*, including the yellow one, are, like their "cousin" *Oleander*, poisonous and the sap from the plants can cause irritation of the skin, so when pruning them, it is better to wear gloves.

Some good news: they are moderately salt tolerant, so as long as you plant them out of direct sea wind, they will be ok in coastal situations. ●●●

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