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Scaevola Success: Complete Guide to Growing Fan Flowers



White scaevola flowers. Credit:
hmstolker, Pixabay

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Learn How to Grow and Care for Scaevola. The Stunning Fan

By [Catherine Boeckmann](#)**Last Updated:** March 11, 2025

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Scaevola is most well-known for its unique fan-shaped blooms that cascade from hanging baskets or spread out across the floor. Being native to Australia, this plant thrives in warm climates but can adapt well to other environments if the care is right.

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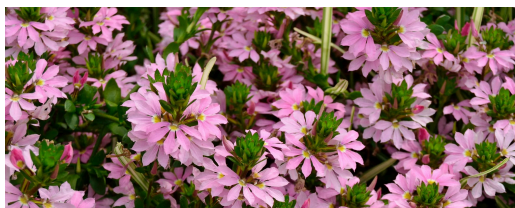
It's very hardy and resilient, drought tolerant, loves full sun, and blooms profusely throughout summer to first frost in several different colors such as blue, pink, purple, or white.

ing stems can reach 2 or more feet long
and attract butterflies, bees, and
other pollinators.

Also known simply as fan flower or fairy
fan flower, scaevola is treated as a tender
perennial in Zones 10 and 11 and as an
annual elsewhere.

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What Do Fan Flowers Look Like?



*Pink fan flowers. Credit:
WhiskerFlowers, Pixabay*

The flowers typically have five distinct petals, but one of the petals is significantly larger and more pronounced, creating a 'fan' or 'half-fan' appearance.

This feature gives them a distinctive, asymmetrical look that stands out in gardens. Here's a closer look at what fan flowers look like:

Flower shape: The flowers have a unique fan shape, with one larger petal and four smaller petals arranged around it. The larger petal is often a vibrant color, while the smaller petals are typically lighter or more subtle.

Color: Fan flowers come in various colors, including blue, purple, pink, white, and lavender. Some varieties may also have bi-colored or multi-colored blooms, with different shades blending together.

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Size: The flowers are generally small to medium-sized, typically 1–2 inches across, but they appear in clusters, creating a full and colorful display.

Growth habit: Scaevola plants are usually trailing or spreading, making them ideal for hanging baskets, ground cover, or containers. The flowers bloom continuously throughout the growing season, offering an abundance of color.

Overall appearance: The plant itself has an attractive spreading or cascading growth habit, with lush green leaves and a vibrant burst of flowers that cover the plant. The blooms give the plant a soft, airy feel, making it perfect for adding tex-

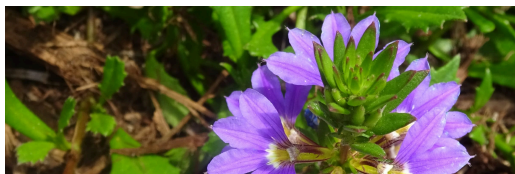
Let's dive straight into the fantastic world
of [scaevola](#)!

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PLANTING



*Purple scaevola flowers. Credit:
Martin LeBar, Flickr*

Planting scaevola is a simple and rewarding process that will ensure your garden is filled with [colorful cascading blooms](#). It's well-known for its hardiness and is very low maintenance, making it the ideal flower for gardeners of any skill level.

Where to Plant

Fan flowers love plenty of full sun and well-draining soil. Choose a spot in your garden that receives at least 6 hours of direct sunlight.

These flowers look amazing in [hanging baskets](#) or in containers that are off the ground so you can enjoy their cascading flowers. They also work well as ground cover and look great on borders or on slopes.

Wherever you choose should have good air circulation to prevent moisture

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When to Plant

Fan flowers are usually grown from cuttings or young plants and they should be planted in the spring, after the last frost.

Planting after the frost allows time for the ground to warm up, giving the roots a better chance of establishing themselves properly and becoming strong.

If you live in a warmer area that doesn't get frost, you can plant scaevola earlier.

If you're growing flowers from seed, start them indoors 6 to 8 weeks before the last

the seeds are very small and germination is slow and not always reliable.

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Only just cover the seed with potting mix, mist lightly, and keep them in a bright area until they germinate (usually around a month). Harden off your seedlings before transplanting them outdoors.

How to Plant

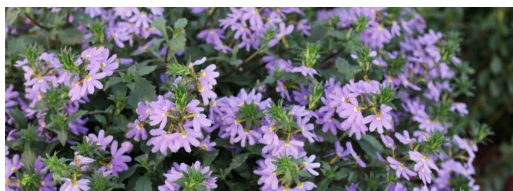
Prepare the soil by making sure it is well-draining. Plant in a slightly moist, well-draining, and warm (70° to 75°F) [potting mix](#).

Dig a hole slightly bigger than the root ball of your plant and gently place it in, ensuring the crown is level with the surface of the soil.

Those rooted in containers in autumn and maintained in a bright, cool, indoor environment can be moved outdoors in spring once the threat of frost has passed.

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GROWING



*Purple Fan Flowers. Credit: Proven
Winners*

Care Requirements for Scaevola

These plants are the perfect fit for hot areas. Where lesser plants will wilt and drop their blossoms, scaevola won't let you down and needs minimal ongoing care.

Light: Place in full sun to partial shade or filtered/dappled sunlight. 6 to 8 hours of sun is optimal. If you're growing in an extremely hot area (*desert-like*), choose somewhere with dappled sunlight.

Soil: These plants thrive in most [soil types](#), as long as the drainage is good.

Water: Water regularly to keep the soil evenly moist but not wet. To prevent root rot, allow the soil to dry out slightly between waterings.

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Fertilizer: Fertilize regularly with a low-phosphorus product to promote flowering. The plant is sensitive to phosphorus, which can cause foliage discoloration and/or desiccation.

Temperature: Scaevola grows rapidly in warm and hot weather conditions between 70 and 85°F. If the temperatures are below 60°F, they won't flower well, or at all!

Pruning

If you're growing this plant as an annual, you might want to trim it to keep it tidy and prevent it from becoming too leggy. Trimming them back will encourage a

Prune lightly throughout the growing season, especially in early spring to help shape the plant. Use sharp pruning shears to avoid damaging the stems.

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Propagating

The most common growing method is by propagating 4- to 6-inch-long flower-free vegetative cuttings. Remove leaves from the bottom half of the cutting and dip the cut end in the rooting hormone.

Plant the end into a potting mix and place it in a bright area that has a consistent

ily with this plant so be sure not to overwater.

Roots will begin to form in around a month at which point the flower can be moved to a warm sunny location for another 4 weeks until it is large enough to plant outdoors.

Repotting Fan Flowers

Scaevola grows quickly! They'll need repotting every year or 2, or whenever they double in size. Signs that it's time to repot include:

- Roots emerging from the drainage holes
- Stunted growth
- Becoming top heavy

The best time to repot is early spring before the growing season starts properly, but it can be done anytime. Follow the steps below to repot:

1. Choose a pot with plenty of drainage holes that is 1 or 2 inches larger than your current pot.
2. Prepare the new pot by adding a layer of well-draining soil.
3. Water the current plant to soften the soil and remove it from the pot taking care not to damage the roots.
4. Examine the roots for signs of damage or rot, and trim away any unhealthy roots. If the roots are tightly bound, gently loosen them.
5. Place the plant in the center of the new pot and fill around the root ball with potting mix gently pressing as you go to eliminate air pockets. Leave

6. Water your fan flower and place it in a bright location with indirect light to help it adjust for a few days.

Overwintering

Whether you should overwinter Scaevola depends on your local climate and the growing conditions you provide.

In mild climates (hardiness Zones 9-11), it can be overwintered outdoors as it tolerates mild winters and will continue to bloom with the right care. In these Zones, the plant may even act as a perennial, continuing to grow and bloom year-round.

In colder climates (Zones 8 and below), fan flowers are not frost-tolerant and will die back in freezing temperatures.

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If you need to bring your scaevola indoors, before the first frost, carefully dig up the plant, making sure to keep the root ball intact. Trim back any dead or damaged stems and leaves.

Place the plant in a bright, sunny spot, like a south-facing window, and ensure it gets at least 6 hours of indirect sunlight each day. Water sparingly during the winter months, as the plant will not need as much moisture when it's not actively growing. Avoid overwatering, which can lead to root rot.

A more popular option is to take cuttings so you don't have to overwinter the whole plant. Follow the steps above on propagating!



Vibrant purple fan flowers. Credit: manfredrichter, Pixabay

Types

These beautiful flowers come in a wide variety of colors and sizes, each offering a unique look for your garden. Some popular types include:

‘Blue Wonder’ (*Scaevola aemula*): one of the first developed; violet- blue flowers.

‘Bombay series’ (*S. aemula*): blue, pink, or white flowers.

‘Whirlwind’ (*S. aemula*): blue, pink, or white flowers.

‘Pink Fanfare’ (*S. aemula*): soft pink flowers.



PESTS/DISEASES

There aren't any really serious diseases that afflict this hardy plant. Sometimes you might experience black root rot, Botrytis blight, Pythium root, and stem rot, but these are all generally due to watering too much.

Pests that could potentially affect your fan flowers are:

- Aphids
- Mealybugs
- Scale insects

If the leaves of your plant are yellowing, this could be a sign of too much sun (if they're crisp) or too little sun (if they're wilting). If you notice any brown spots, this could be a sign of overwatering or poor soil conditions.

WIT AND WISDOM

Based on *scaevus*, Latin for “left-handed,” the word Scaevola was once given as a surname to the family of Roman soldier Gaius Mucius (c. 509 B.C.), who deliberately burned his right hand to demonstrate courage to enemy captors.

Due to its adaptability in harsh conditions, scaevola is known to symbolize resilience and strength in the plant world!

FLOWERS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Catherine Boeckmann



Catherine Boeckmann loves nature, stargazing, and gardening so it's not surprising that she and The Old Farmer's Almanac found each other. She leads digital content for the Almanac website, and is also a certified master gardener in the state of Indiana. [Read More from Catherine Boeckmann](#)

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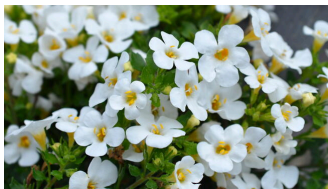
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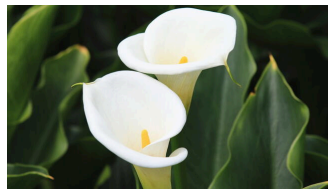
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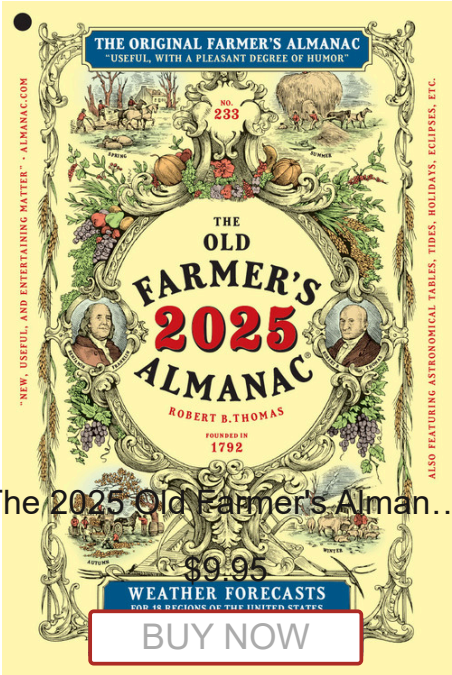
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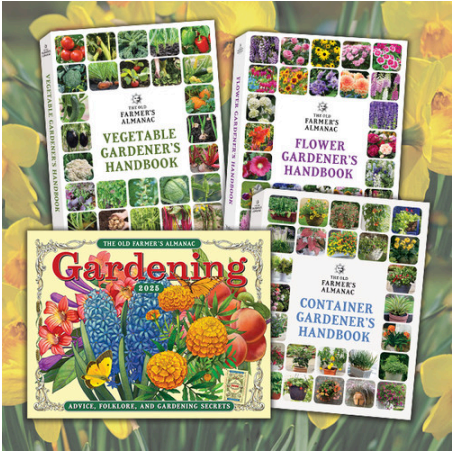
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