THE HOYA PLANT

The Hoya plant is in the genus – *Aselepiad (AA-SEL–EPIAD)* having some 200 to 300 varieties. The family is *Apocynaceae* (APO-CYNACE-AE) commonly called Dogbane. There are several hundred species found world- wide. The plant is often called WAX FLOWER. My variety is *Hoya Carnosa.*

Hoyas are evergreen perennial creepers or vines in their native Asian countries, (India, China, Thailand, Malaysia, Viet Nam, Indonesia, Philippines, Polynesia, New Guinea and Australia.) but known in non-tropical zones as easy to grow house plants.

DESCRIPTION:

LEAVES: Hoyas have simple leaves arranged in an opposite pattern, and are typically succulent. Leaves have many forms, and can be smooth, felted or hairy, deep green in color, sometimes with light silvery spots. Some species exhibit Mutualism, where leaves form a concave cup over the tree trunk to shelter the ants climbing to act as pollinators. Some leaves have been reported to be as large as two feet long, others that hang in clusters resembling string beans.

FLOWERS: The form is typically star-shaped, with five thick waxy, triangular petals, topped with another star-shaped structure - the corona. These flowers appear in remarkable clusters, and look positively artificial. Colors are mostly white or pink, but can exhibit yellow, dark reds, even green. Interestingly, the flowers carry a very heavy scent, but only at night, as they depend on night pollinators like moths and flies which are nocturnal. When mine blooms the flowers will last for about two weeks and the scent is so heady, we have to close the dining room doors or be driven out of the house by the overpowering scent!!

CARE AND MAINTANENCE: It’s been my experience that the Hoya Carnosa is hardy and an undemanding house plant. Water only once a week, or less. Over-watering is not advised, and I’ve found discourages flowering. Fertilize only occasionally with a liquid plant food. It can be trimmed for cuttings or appearance without a problem. It likes some indirect sun. Mine is in a corner between two windows and is happy.

PROPAGATION: Cuttings root in water, then soil with no problem. The plants are sold as cuttings, rooted or unrooted or as a potted plant.

SOURCES: Nurseries, Catalogs, on-line, and GARDEN CLUB MEMBERS.

OTHER HOYA:

This specie is known as *Hoya Carnosa compacta* .

Its common name is HINDU INDIAN ROPE PLANT, and lives up to its name. Original plant was given to me by Julie Kemp. This is a “baby” from that plant. It is very slow growing, but in all other respects is similar in care and conditions to the larger variety. It has yet to flower, perhaps because it is on our sunporch and gets watered with the other plants more frequently.

Pictures are available on my Iphone.

Barbara Seeman June 5, 2017