



# *NERIUM OLEANDER L.*

**Fam. Apocynaceae**

## DESCRIPTION

It is a mostly shrubby evergreen, particularly suitable for hedges and landscaping.

## LEAVES

Leathery, lanceolate, linear leaves with entire dark-green margins. Like all other parts of the shrub, they are poisonous.

## HABITAT

Shrub species native to Asia.

## FRUITS

Similar to elongated pods, the fruits open up when fully ripe, releasing light and feathery seeds.

## DISTRIBUTION

It is a very widespread plant in Italy, mainly because of its fast growth and spontaneous diffusion.

## STEM

Greyish in colour, the young branches are green and glabrous. The old stems and branches have a greyish bark.

## FLOWERS

Corymb inflorescences, composed of single or double flowers of different colours – white, pink, red and fuchsia. They are large and showy, arranged in a radial symmetry at the end of each branch. The cultivated varieties are double-flowered and are almost all fragrant. It blooms from June to September in all its splendid shades.

## INTERESTING FACTS

It is a poisonous plant for both humans and pets such as dogs, cats, horses, cattle and small mammals. In fact, every part of the plant is toxic, including the bark, leaves, seeds and flowers. Using gardening gloves is recommended for the cultivation and care of oleanders, to avoid direct contact. History tells us that several soldiers of the Napoleonic troops died of poisoning after using oleander branches as skewers while grilling meat during military campaigns in Italy.

## ROOTS

Large and deep root system.

