

The right depth

When planting bulbs, the general guideline is to measure from tip to base and dig a hole two or three times deeper. There are exceptions to the rule, such as hippeastrums.

Use the chart below and for best results, plant a little deeper in light, sandy soil and less deep in heavy clay.

1. Anemone
2. Cyclamen
3. Starflower
4. Freesia
5. Grape Hyacinth
6. Daffodil
7. Hippeastrum
8. Snowflake
9. Tulip
10. Lilium



Growing Begonias from Cuttings

How to grow Begonias from cuttings



WORDS JERRY COLEBY-WILLIAMS **PHOTOGRAPHY** JARED FOWLER

A quick and easy guide to cultivating and growing begonias.

Begonias are one of the easier shrubs to grow. This step by step illustrates how to multiply your begonias from cuttings.

Step-by-step



1. Leaf cuttings

Leaf cuttings are the best way to propagate begonias that grow from rhizomes, like rex and iron cross varieties.



2. Slice

Slice large leaves into wedges, each with a vein.



3. Insert & water

Use a dibber to make holes in propagating mix. Insert the leaf stem or wedge, with the vein pointing down. Firm in and water lightly. Roots form in a few weeks.

How to save Tomato Seeds

How to save tomato seeds



Clive Blazey shares how to save tomato seeds in six simple steps.

Tomato seeds will last four to six years if stored under cool, dry conditions. Find out how to get the most out of them!

Step-by-step



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1.

Tomato seeds should be collected from ripe fruit. Squeeze the seeds, pulp into a bucket and leave for a few days to ferment.



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2.

Rinse the seeds under fresh water to clean away tomato pulp and the gel coating that surrounds the seed. Repeat until the seeds are clean.



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3.

Separate the healthy seed from unviable seed. The healthy seed is denser, and will sink to the bottom of the bucket. Discard the seed that floats in the water - just like panning for gold!



4.

Tip the seed into a sieve for a final clean.



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5.

Spread in a thin layer to dry on newspaper or a plate.

6.

Dry in a well ventilated area and don't forget to label them! Store in an airtight container.

This is an edited extract from *All About Tomatoes* by Clive Blazey and available from [The Diggers Club](#).

How to grow vegetables in foam boxes

How to grow vegetables in a foam box



WORDS JENNIFER STACKHOUSE

Foam boxes are light, easy to manage and insulate roots.

You can grow [garden](#) vegetables in most containers, but foam boxes – especially those that held broccoli down at the greengrocers – are ideal. They are light, easy to manage, and the foam helps insulate the roots.

Use deep boxes to give your vegies plenty of space to grow their roots. This is particularly important for larger vegetables. If you can't find a really deep box, cut the base off one and stand another in it to give you the extra depth needed for a [tomato](#) or cucumber plant.

What you will need

- Foam box
- Trowel
- Potting mix
- Compost or aged cow manure
- Bricks
- Seedlings
- Seaweed plant tonic
- Mulch
- Water
- Shade Cloth

Step-by-step



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1. Getting started

Gather your equipment, including a foam box



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2. Drainage and potting mix

Make six holes in the base, three on each side. These provide drainage.

Use a good quality potting mix to fill your box. Mix well-rotted homemade or bought compost or aged cow manure into the potting mix. Compost or manure helps the mix hold water and provides nourishment for your vegetables. Around 10–30 per cent compost or manure is beneficial.

Elevate the boxes slightly by placing them on bricks to help them drain. Select a spot for your veggie boxes in full sun or with morning sun and afternoon shade. Now you're ready to plant.

For fast results, use some advanced lettuce or other seedlings. If you're willing to wait a bit longer and want to save some money, [sow some seeds](#), planting just a few at a time. Reseal the seed packet and keep it in a cool dry place so you can gradually plant the remaining seeds.



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3. Less is more

The key to success is not to over plant. Restrict yourself to four soft-hearted lettuces, or a couple of herbs, or one tall tomato or cucumber per box. If you want more produce, start more boxes, but plant gradually so there are always some crops coming on. This way you avoid a glut.

Water in new plantings with a seaweed plant tonic then spread some mulch such as pea straw, sugar cane or lucerne around the plants. This helps keep the roots cool and moist. Spread the mulch loosely so that water can still penetrate easily.



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4. Regular care

Vegies in containers should be inspected and watered daily – more frequently in very hot weather. Use a watering can on non-watering days. Try to recycle clean wastewater from the house to water the vegies. Add some liquid plant food to their water every week.

Vegetables need lots of sunshine but new plantings can be burnt by really hot sun, so it's a good idea to shade new plantings until they are well established. Either keep them in a sheltered spot for a couple of days or cover the containers with some shade cloth. Also shade your crop on heatwave days.

Local Birds

Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo length 60 cm

Eastern Rosella length 30 cm

Tawny Frogmouth length 44 cm

Red Wattlebird length 35 cm

Grey Butcherbird length 30 cm

Pied Currawong length 45 cm

Spotted Dove length 30 cm (Introduced Species)

Laughing Kookaburra length 45 cm

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo length 50 cm

Crimson Rosella length 35 cm

Red-browed Finch length 12 cm

Rainbow Lorikeet length 30 cm

House Sparrow length 15 cm (Introduced Species)

Noisy Miner length 25 cm

Common Blackbird length 27 cm (Introduced Species)

Willie Wagtail length 20 cm

backyard birds OF VICTORIA

White-plumed Honeyeater length 16 cm

Eastern Spinebill length 15 cm

Yellow-rumped Thornbill length 11 cm

Silvereye length 12 cm

New Holland Honeyeater length 20 cm

Superb Fairy-wren (female and male) length 14 cm

Common (Indian) Myna length 25 cm (Introduced Species)

Magpie-lark (Pee-wee) length 25 cm

Galah length 35 cm

Australian Magpie length 40 cm

For inquiries about birds and domestic gardens, contact:
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Saunders' Case Moth caterpillar



Saunders' Case Moth caterpillar in its case

Case moths spin their cases out of silk and most species attach leaves, twigs, sand or soil to the outside for protection and camouflage. There are a number of different species and each species builds a distinctive-looking case. However, as individual case moths use whatever materials are available to them, there can be considerable variation in the appearance of cases within a species.

The Saunders' Case Moth is one of the largest species of case moths in Australia – their cases can be as large as 15cm long. Individuals of this species cover their cases with little pieces of twigs. They poke the front end of their bodies out the top of their case to feed, collect case decorations, and cling to surfaces as they move about.

As they grow, Saunders' Case Moths expand their cases from the top (head) end, adding additional twigs as they go. They do this by cutting off appropriately-sized twigs, attaching them temporarily to the top of the case and then disappearing inside to cut a slit where they plan to attach the new stick. This is no mean feat. Case moth cocoons are incredibly tough; cutting a slit for a new stick can take over an hour!

Case moths spend most of their lives in the caterpillar phase; this part of their life cycle can last 1-2 years. As caterpillars, they never leave their cases. However, they can be very mobile, dragging their large cocoons along as they move around. If they feel threatened they can seal off the end of the cocoon, cutting a new opening once the threat has passed. The females continue to live in their cases after they've pupated into adult moths, but the males leave their cases after pupation to fly off



The female adult has no wings, so she remains in her case after emergence from the pupa. She is white with a brown head, and has a length of about 3 cms.





The male has wings and emerges completely from the case, and flies off. He is strikingly marked, with black wings, a orange hairy head, and a black and orange banded abdomen. The wings are short, and the abdomen is long and prehensile, presumably to facilitate reaching into the silken case of a female for copulation. He has a wingspan of about 3 cms, and a similar body length.

Fuchsia Electric Lights



This fuchsia is a real cracker!

'It's a cracker!' - the very words we used in our trial notes when we assessed this new variety from Holland.....Electric Lights is just the sort of fuchsia so loved on the continent and forms a dense ball of single rose and purple blooms which last all summer, through heat or rain. Give it a place on your patio and you will not be disappointed.

Anigozanthos (Kangaroo Paw) – Bush Gems Minis – Bush Fling

Flowering Spring, Summer, Winter, Autumn

Aspect Full Sun, Drought Tolerant, Heat Tolerant

Type Australian Native, Bird Attracting, Height to 40cm, Width to 40cm

Usage Garden, Cut Flower, Pot, Tub



Handy Hints

A. Seasol mixed in grey water plus liquid Wettasoil if water does not soak into soil.

B. Vinegar added to grey water – 1 cap/10 Lt reduces the acidity of the water.

C. Black spot on roses

To keep roses healthy you need to carry out the following:-

- a) Feed roses every 6 to 8 week with rose food or Dynamic Lifter.
- b) Apply sulphate of potash twice a year.
- c) To prevent black spot open up the centre of the bush to allow air circulation.

Water at the base of the plant not the leaves.

Apply the following solution to the leaves (five liters of water mixed with two tea spoons of Carb. Soda, and two or three drops of detergent or seaweed extraction }.

D. Slugs and Snail control:





wet leafy crops and surrounding soil with coffee solution made from one part expresso coffee in 10 parts of water, repeat spray weekly or after rain.

E. Soak water granules in a solution of water mixed with Seasol, Maxicrop etc – place granules in the soil around plants – provides water plus fertilizer.

F. Propagating Lilium Bulbs

step-by-step: how to propagate liliium bulbs

Liliums are one of the most striking flowers to grow in the garden or in a pot and propagating them is cheap and easy. Follow the instructions below to grow these beautiful bulbs from their scales to increase your quantities.

			
<p>1 Buy new bulbs or use existing ones and gently twist off the scales from the bottom of a healthy bulb.</p>	<p>2 Dust the scales and the remaining bulb with a mixture of rooting powder and a fungicide.</p>	<p>3 Place the scales in a plastic bag with damp sphagnum moss or damp newspaper. Fasten bag.</p>	<p>4 Small bulbs will form at the base of each scale and these can be planted 2.5cm deep into a pot.</p>

G. Growing Strawberries

1. Select healthy-looking runners from the parent plants. The leaves should be green and free from diseases.
2. Cut the runner stem off at the base of the new plant and prune off most of the leaves, leaving only new and unfurling ones.
3. Place young plants into pots filled with potting mix and keep moist until established.

H. Propagating Clivias from seed



step-by-step: propagating clivia seeds

Planting seeds can be rewarding and occasionally you may be surprised at the plant variations. Be patient as it can take four years for the flowers to appear.

1 Leave the seed pods on the clivia plant until they change colour to yellow or red and are soft. Split open and remove the seeds, soak them overnight in water and a drop of bleach.

2 Soak two paper towels in a weak solution of bleach and water, let some drip away so it's not too wet.

3 Line the bottom of a container with the paper towel, place seeds on it and cover with another bleach-dipped layer of paper towel. Cover container with an airtight lid.

4 Rest seeds in the warmest part of the house to germinate. This can take from two to six weeks.

Recommended Roses to Plant

Exhibition Roses

Admiral Rodney, Esmeralda, Neue Revue, Red Devil, April Hamer, Gold Medal, Osiria, Silver Lining, Christian Dior, Kardinal, Our Rosamond, Sir Harry Pilkington, Corso, Mirato, Peter Frankenfeld, Tineke, Diamond Jubilee, Mme G Delbard, Pink Silk, Vol de Nuit.

Garden Roses

Alexander, Double Delight, Brigadoon, Just Joey, Pascali, Aotearoa, Elina, Kardinal, Peter Frankenfeld, First Love, Marjorie Atherton, Paul Shirvelle, Chicago Peace, Folklore, Minnie Watson, Sylvia, Crystalline, Helmut Schmidt, Mr Lincoln, Tournament of Roses, Diamond Jubilee, Joyfulness, Paradise, Valencia.

Cluster Flowered/Floribunda Roses

Annie's Song, Elizabeth of Glamis, Gold Bunny, Marlina, Apricot Nectar, Evelyn Fison, Golden Holstein, Pink Parfait, Bella Rosa, Europeana, Hannah Gordon, Seduction, Bridal Pink, French Lace, Iceberg, Sexy Remy, Caid, Friesia, Margaret Merril, Shady Lady.

Climbing Roses

Altissimo, Dublin Bay, Clmb Iceberg, New Dawn, Banksia Lutea, Clmb Gold Bunny, Mermaid, Renae, Blossomtime, High Hopes, Nancy Hayward, Water Music.

Modern Shrub Roses

Abraham Darby, Ballerina, Bonica, Buff Beauty, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Cymbeline, Graham Thomas, Heidesommer, Heritage, Lavender Dream, L D Braithwaite, Many Happy Returns, Mary Rose, Our Rosy Carpet, Pinkie, Rosendorf Sparrieshoop, Sally Holmes, Sparrieshoop, Radox Bouquet.

Heritage Roses

Charles de Mills, Fantin Latour, Felicite Parmentier, Jacques Cartier, Lady Hillingdon, Mme Alfred Carriere, Mme Hardy, Mme Isaac Periere, Mutabilis, Penelope, Sombreuil, Zepherine Drouhin.

Australian Raised Roses

Victoria Gold, Annie's Song, Cecilia, Lorraine Lee, Mrs Fred Danks, April Hamer, Daydream, Minnie Watson, Our Rosamond, Borderer, Janette Murray, Nancy Hayward, Water Music.

Miniature Roses

Carrot Top, Hot Tamale, Minnie Pearl, Sequoia Gold, Green Ice, Jean Kenneally, Party Girl, Snow Bride, Heartbreaker, Jeanne L'Joie (Climber), Plum Duffy, Starina, Hi Ho (Climber), Joycie, Rainbow's End, Sun Baby, Holy Toledo, Loving Touch, Red Beauty, Winter Magic.

Rose Calendar

WINTER

June

Roses going dormant & dropping leaves. Start planting new roses using compost & slow release fertiliser only. Move established roses to new locations if they are in the wrong place or too close together. Prune well before moving.

July

Start pruning roses. Remove all leaves from bushes & rake up all around the rose beds. Do not compost leaves. Use Kocide & White Oil mixed together to spray on bare roses & lightly on ground around bushes to kill all black spot spores. Repeat in 2 weeks time. Report roses into fresh, best quality potting mix with slow release fertiliser granules. Root prune by a quarter as well as pruning top.

August At end of month feed all roses with Grow Better Organic fertiliser or Blood & Bone or Complete Rose Food. Water in well.

SPRING

September

Full Spring growth. Watch for aphids on new growth. Use Pyrethrum, Folimat or Confidor. When buds start appearing, commence spraying fortnightly with a foliar feed i.e. Charlie Carp, Seasol or Phostrogen. Spray with fungicide for Black Spot.

October

Mulch with lucerne hay or pea straw. Continue foliar feeding. Main flush of Spring blooms later this month. Stake water shoots with bamboo stakes to prevent wind damage.

November

Spring flush continues. Deadhead & enjoy your roses. Take photos. Visit nurseries, Spring Rose Show (Mount Waverley) & rose gardens to get ideas. Visit Morwell Rose Garden, State Rose Garden at Werribee Park, Alister Clark Rose Garden Bulla.

SUMMER

December

Feed with organic fertiliser, top up mulch & deadhead. Water well, especially pots. Prune all once flowering ramblers such as Albertine, Banksia roses & heritage shrubs i.e. Albas, Gallicas, Damasks. Watch for spider mites in dry, hot weather. Try wetting underneath

foliage in the early mornings to discourage them.

January

Top up mulch well. Continue deadheading. Minimum watering if you are going to summer trim next month to time flowers for a special occasion or a show.

February

Summer trim all roses if timing flowering for a show or special event. Feed with organic fertiliser & water in well. Top up mulch & water deeply regularly.

AUTUMN

March

Foliar feed as in Spring. Prune winter flowering roses such as Lorraine Lee & Nancy Hayward. Watch for aphids.

April

Autumn flush of roses. Deadhead & enjoy. Prepare soil for new rose beds. Dig deeply, apply manure & compost. Turn over regularly.

May

Some good blooms still. Send away for rose catalogues from specialist rose nurseries & order new roses for winter planting.

CARE OF CHRISTMAS CACTUS AND RELATED PLANTS

Christmas cacti (*Schlumbergera truncata* and its hybrids) and other similar cacti, often known as *Zygocactus* or Easter cactus, are found in the rain forests and cool mountains from Central America to southern Brazil. In nature, they grow in trees, rooting where organic material accumulates. This means that they are adapted to dappled, indirect sunlight, high humidity, abundant water, extremely rapid drainage and a very narrow range of temperatures, never too hot, never freezing.

Common name: *Zygocactus*, Christmas cactus, and Crab's claw cactus

Botanic name: *Schlumbergera truncata* Hybrids

Best climate: *Zygocactus* will grow everywhere in Australia. In cooler areas they make good indoor plants.

LIGHT: Treat your Christmas cactus much as you would any other house plant. It requires bright, indirect light. Dropping of buds or flowers is a frequent response to a dramatic change in light or heat. North or eastern facing rooms or porches are ideal.

WATERING: Water when surface of the soil is dry. Take care that the plant does not dry out completely between waterings, just the soil surface. Water thoroughly, so that

water runs out of the bottom of the pot. Continuous watering systems should not be used for an extended period of time.

FERTILIZATION: Use a water soluble high-phosphorus fertilizer such as 15-30-15 at half the recommended formula for house plants. Fertilize once a month from March through August. Beginning a month before trying to initiate blooming, usually September for Christmas cactus and January for the others, cease to fertilize.

BLOOMING: The blooming of Christmas cacti is influenced by the increasingly long nights and cooling temperatures of autumn. As noted above cease to fertilize the plant in September. It takes 4-6 weeks for buds to form. To encourage bud formation, move the plant to an area where it will receive at least 14 hours of uninterrupted darkness (even street lights count) and the temperature will be between 55-65 at night. This can be a shed, a patio, a garage, a closet or any similar location. During this time, water half as often as you were previously, or just enough to prevent wilting. Temperatures above 75 degrees F will prevent bud formation.

Once buds have formed, control of the number of hours of daylight is no longer necessary and normal watering can be resumed.

However, move the plant carefully and avoid moving to an area that is very bright, very warm or in a hot draft; the buds will fall. You should be rewarded with a profusion of flowers from as early as October to as late as January, depending on when the darkening period began.

Follow the same timing and procedure for the other varieties, but the entire cycle begins in January for bloom which will result from late March through April.

REPOTTING: Christmas cacti bloom better when somewhat pot-bound, but all eventually will need to be repotted. Use a well-drained, peaty soil mixture. The best time to repot is after blooming is complete. Test the drainage by running water through the pot to make sure it drains quickly. It is usually best to use a pot which is only one pot size larger than the previous pot, and lightly scratch or roughen the edge of the old soil to encourage root formation.

PRUNING: These plants bloom on the new growth. To encourage more prolific blooming or to shape the plants, prune back to the desired size after blooming is complete. Simply pull or break off at the joints, no further treatment is necessary.

PROBLEMS: These plants are generally very easy to culture. They are occasionally afflicted with a bacteria infection which causes wilting from which the stem does not recover and a bark-like scale on the older stems. This condition is brought on by poor cultural conditions, usually a cycle of too dry then too wet, and is difficult to correct. It can result in the death of the plant, the best prevention is steady, regular watering and fertilization.

PROPAGATION: These plants are typically complicated hybrids that must be propagated vegetatively. To propagate, break off a series of 3-5 joints and either place directly in water or in a light, moist sand. They will root readily. Be advised that most are named hybrids which are protected by plant patents and cannot be propagated for sale without permission.



Zygocactus

Handy Hints

Magnesium Deficiency

Yellow mottling on the leaves of plants!

Check for the outside proportions turning pale yellow on green leaves. Old leaves will drop off when they develop brown blotches. This is a sign your plant is lacking in magnesium. If you detect yellow mottling treat the leaves immediately.

Magnesium is a component of chlorophyll, (the green colour in leaves) which is food for plants. For plants to have energy it is necessary to have chlorophyll.

Yellow mottling on leaves affects various plants such as citrus, roses, camellias, azaleas and gardenias. The most prone sufferers are apples and citrus.

Try this solution

½ litre of Water

½ teaspoon of Epsom salts

Empty spray bottle

Fill the spray bottle with half a litre of water and add half a teaspoon of Epsom salts. Agitate vigorously.

Now you are ready to start spraying your plants.

Chilli Spray

This spray is best used to combat aphids.

Ingredients

3 Garlic cloves, crushed

2 hot chillies, finely chopped

1 litre plastic spray bottle

Method

Add above ingredients to a 1 litre of boiling water. Leave to rest over night. Using a strainer remove seeds to ensure that liquid is clear. Place clear liquid into a clean plastic bottle with nozzle.

Organic White Oil Spray

Whiteflies look like very tiny moth-like flying bugs. They are not flies at all – in fact, they are related to aphids. Whiteflies will damage plants such as tomatoes, cucumbers, beans and cabbages. Their eggs are found under the leaves of plants, especially new leaves. If you notice weakening and discolouration in your plant, check under the leaves and spray any infested areas using Organic White Oil.

Ingredients

½ cup vegetable oil

1 cup water

1 tablespoon natural soap (in flakes)

1 plastic spray bottle

Method

Grate the natural soap into the spray bottle (to get soap flakes). Add the vegetable oil and water to the spray bottle. Give the bottle a good shake. Now you can start spraying on all your plants.

General Gardening Information:

- Geraniums - fertilize with Flower and Fruit fertilizer
Use Baycor for rust spots on leaves.
- Azalea petal blight – pick off effected flowers or spray new buds with Bayleton and Confidor spray on leaves to prevent Lacewing bugs from effecting leaves.

Camellia Bud Balling



'Bud balling' is a syndrome where buds form but do not flower. Typically the buds develop almost to the point of opening, then stop developing, go brown, and drop off.

If your camellia is susceptible to bud balling, here's what to do:

- * Pinch off half the buds, it's better to have half as many flowers, than none at all.

- * Give the camellia a good *feed with an azalea and camellia fertiliser* every six to eight weeks from about August right through to March. After applying the fertilizer at the recommended rate, *add a teaspoon of Epsom salts to five litres of water* - shake it around and water the camellia with that.

Nobody knows the exact cause of bud balling but if, after all that, your camellia is still suffering, you've got two more options: Move the plant to an area where it gets a lot less sun or, as Colin suggests, only partly in jest, "Enjoy a lovely green plant with glossy leaves."

Fuchsia, Hellebores & Geranium Culture

About Fuchsias

The genus contains over 100 species with countless more cultivars produced through hybridization. In the U.S. we generally think of them as tender perennials or houseplants, but in their native South and Central America they can be grown as trees and shrubs. Some of the species are trailers. The name Fuchsia is derived from the name of Leonard Fuchs, a German botanist. Fuchsias pendulous flowers are found in an array of shades of white, pink, purple, red and cream. Some are brilliantly multi-colored. Hummingbirds are attracted to the flowers.

How to care for your Fuchsia

Try to plant your fuchsia as soon as possible. Be sure to keep the soil moist to the touch if you do not transplant immediately. Check the frost dates in your area before planting or moving outdoors.

Where do I plant my Fuchsia?

Fuchsias are very popular as showy hanging plant displays, trained as standards, planted in summer bedding and window boxes. They may be grown outdoors year round in zones 8 and 9. Fuchsias require shade and protection from afternoon sun. Provide good air circulation around specimens to help prevent powdery mildew.

How do I plant my Fuchsias?

Dig a hole that is twice as wide and deep as the container that the plant is in. Place the fuchsia in the planting hole making sure it is even with the soil level, and gently firm the soil around it. Water it in very well. If planted in a container, water until it flows out from the drainage hole in the bottom of the pot.

What should I do in order to have my Fuchsias increase in beauty year to year?

During the summer, protect from hot sun, water deeply and fertilize once a week with a balanced fertilizer. In Zones other than 8 and 9, Fuchsias need to be treated as a tender plant. Lift and bring indoors for the winter or take cuttings. Cutting back after bloom will encourage new flowers which are produced on new wood. Be careful not to over-water during the winter.

How to Care for your Hellebores

Try to plant your hellebores as soon as possible; they are very hardy and will have no problem acclimating to your growing area. Be sure to keep the soil moist to the touch if you do not transplant immediately. If you do plan on keeping your hellebores in their containers for any length of time, an ideal location to hold them is on the north side of your home where they will receive little to no sun. An unheated garage is also a good place. If you do not plan on planting for at least a week, consider heeling/trenching the plant into the north side of the garden. You'll need to pay attention to the moisture, always keeping the root zone moist to the touch.

Where do I plant my hellebores?

Your hellebores should be planted in a partially shaded, moist site. If you are in an area that has hot summers, it is most important that the plants be shaded from the afternoon sun.

How do I plant my hellebores?

Dig a hole that is twice as wide and deep as the container the plant is in. Work this soil well and incorporate a balanced, slow-release fertilizer into the planting hole. Backfill the hole and set the plant even with ground level, firming the soil around it.

What should I do in order to have my hellebores increase in beauty from year to year?

The hellebore's evergreen foliage begins growth early in the season, and may be cut to the ground in late fall before the new flower stems emerge. As the flowers fade and seed pods form, you should remove the flower stems to prevent seedlings from growing in the crown of your plant.

How to care for your hardy Geraniums

Try to plant your hardy geraniums as soon as possible. These are adaptable and will have no problem acclimating to your growing area. Be sure to keep the soil moist to the touch if you do not transplant immediately. Protect from strong winds and drying out before planting.

Where do I plant my hardy geraniums?

Hardy geraniums are easy to grow in a wide variety of garden conditions. Most thrive in full sun to light shade in moist, well-drained soils. In areas with hot summers, it is best to site the plants where there is morning sun and afternoon shade. Hardy geraniums blend well with Asters, Nepetas, Hostas, Pulmonarias, dwarf grasses, ferns and sedges. Check the garden conditions recommended for the variety of hardy geranium you purchased.

How do I plant my hardy geraniums?

Dig a hole that is twice as wide and deep as the container the plant is in. Work this soil well and incorporate a balanced, slow-release fertilizer into the planting hole. Backfill the hole and set the plant even with ground level, firming the soil around it. Water in very well, making sure that the roots are in contact with the soil. While plants are getting established in the garden, water as needed.

What should I do in order to have my geraniums increase in beauty from year to year?

When past peak bloom, plants tend to get floppy, leaving their crowns open. Give them a hard shear to rejuvenate foliage, as well as encourage repeat bloom. When sheared back, plants often look renewed after 3-4 weeks. Mulch can be applied to keep weeds down and conserve water.

Monthly Care of Roses

WINTER

June Roses going dormant & dropping leaves. Start planting new roses using compost & slow release fertiliser only. Move established roses to new locations if they are in the wrong place or too close together. Prune well before moving & water in well with Seasol.

July Start pruning roses. Remove all leaves from bushes & rake up all around the rose beds. Do not compost leaves. Use Kocide & White Oil mixed together to spray on bare roses & lightly on ground around bushes to kill all black spot spores. Alternative spray is Lime Sulphur. Repeat in 2 weeks time. For roses growing permanently in large pots, - repot every 2-3 years into fresh, best quality potting mix with slow release fertiliser granules. Root prune by a quarter as well as pruning top hard. Water in well with Seasol.

August At end of month feed all roses with a **specialist rose fertiliser**. We recommend "SUDDEN IMPACT FOR ROSES" ([Neutrog](#)). Water in well.

SPRING

September Full Spring growth. Watch for aphids on new growth. Use Pyrethrum, Folimat or Confidor. When buds start appearing, commence spraying fortnightly with a foliar feed i.e. Charlie Carp, Phostrogen etc. Spray with fungicide (Triforine, Mancozeb) for Black Spot or use Eco Rose & Eco Oil mixed together.

October Mulch with lucerne hay or pea straw. Continue foliar feeding. Main flush of Spring blooms start later this month. Stake water shoots with bamboo stakes to prevent wind damage. Continue spraying with Triforine, Mancozeb or Eco Rose & Eco Oil.

November Spring flush continues. Deadhead & enjoy your roses. Take photos. Visit nurseries, Spring Rose Show (Mount Waverley) & rose gardens to get ideas. Visit Morwell Rose Garden, State Rose Garden at Werribee Park, Alister Clark Rose Garden at Bulla.

SUMMER

December Feed with organic fertiliser, top up mulch & deadhead. Water well, especially pots. Prune all once flowering ramblers such as Albertine, Banksia roses & heritage shrubs i.e. Albas, Gallicas, Damasks. Watch for spider mites in dry, hot weather. Try wetting underneath foliage in the early mornings to discourage them.

January Top up mulch well. Continue deadheading. Ensure adequate water by deep watering.

February Summer trim all roses if timing flowering for a show or special event. (Roses generally repeat flower within approx. 56 days). Feed with organic fertiliser & water in well. Top up mulch & water deeply regularly.

AUTUMN

March Foliar feed as in Spring. Prune winter flowering roses such as Lorraine Lee & Nancy Hayward. Watch for aphids.

April Autumn flush of roses. Deadhead & enjoy. Prepare soil for new rose beds. Dig deeply, apply manure & compost. Turn over regularly.

May Some good blooms still on bushes. Send away for rose catalogues from specialist rose nurseries & order new roses for winter planting.

Tips on Growing and Caring for Kalanchoes

All of the kalanchoes are members of the Crassulaceae family. This means they are relatives of the jade plant.

Technically, the common kalanchoe is a perennial even though it is commonly grown and treated pretty much as an annual, meaning some folks buy the plants when they are in bloom and discard them when they've finished flowering.

The exact appearance of the other kalanchoes can vary tremendously. What can be said is that they all will have thick, attractive leaves that are succulent in nature. The actual size, shape, and colour can vary. The bold foliage tends to be coarse. Sometimes there will be hints of red or purple along the margins. Don't be overly concerned if a kalanchoe starts to lose some of its lower leaves. Most likely, this is a normal response and doesn't necessarily mean the plant is sick.

Kalanchoes have vibrant blooms that normally open in the summer through the fall. These flowers emerge in terminal clusters. They are available in a wide range of colours.

For the most part, kalanchoes need a brightly lit exposure. Depending on the species, some are adapted pretty well to partial shade outdoors. Indoors, we need to give them some exposure at least part of the day to full sun if possible.

Kalanchoes are pretty easy going plants. But they do demand a light, quick draining potting mix. Heavy ones aren't recommended. Quicker draining ones tend to contain either sand or coir.

Whatever type of potting soil you use, allow it to dry out between waterings. Like most succulents, kalanchoes don't need a lot of water.

So far as the typical problems are concerned, kalanchoes are most likely to suffer from leaf spots in humid weather. If your area is muggy, choose a spot where it can get cross ventilation. Allow enough space between the plants for good air circulation, which will also help prevent problems with leaf spot.

Now, let's look at some of the ways you can use kalanchoes in outdoor gardens. In frost-free areas, they can be used as ground covers. Elsewhere, they could be planted in annual flower beds in late spring after all danger of frost is past. I wouldn't recommend planting kalanchoes outdoors in areas that typically receive large amounts of rainfall. This is not good for the plants.

Regarding propagation, the kalanchoes are one of the easiest around. The preferred method varies somewhat from one species to another. Some species will produce plantlets along the edges of the leaves. For those, all you have to do is pot some of these babies up, and you should be all set.

For other kinds, you can take stem cuttings. Allow these to dry out for about 24 hours before you pot them up. This minimizes the potential for rot to occur.