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How To Plant & Grow Herbaceous Peony

Flowering period: Late spring to summer

Likes: Cold winters, mild/ hot summers.

Soil: Slightly alkaline soil (ideal pH is around 6.5-7.5) well drained with plenty of added organic matter.

Position: Full sun or partial shade. Choose a planting position where it will receive at least 6 hours of sunshine a day. They are also quite heavy feeders so they enjoy moist, fertile soil with good drainage. Avoid planting in soggy soils as this is likely to cause the crown of the plant to rot. If your soil is less than perfect then you can improve it by adding plenty of well rotted manure or compost before planting, to improve moisture levels and soil fertility.

Before You Plant Your Herbaceous Peony: Check to see where the highest bud is on the crown of the plant. The highest bud needs to be planted just 5cm (2") below soil level. It's important not to plant it too deeply as this can delay or even prevent the plant from flowering.

Planting. Dig your planting hole making sure that the crown will sit 5cm (2") below soil level. Tap the soil down gently and don't forget to water it in afterwards to settle the soil. Feed with a handful of lime and a handful of slow release fertiliser.

Feeding Your Plant. Feed with a handful of Lime and slow release fertiliser twice a year; once on Melbourne Cup day and once on Australia Day. This is essential for the production of flowers. Be generous with the lime.

First Year: After planting you can expect lots of red shoots and just one or two small flowers. For the best results, remove the flowering bud when it appears. This will prevent the plant and feeder roots trying to sustain a flower before it has the energy to do so, due to transplanting.

Garden Care Second year: Deadhead after flowering. In early spring apply a balanced slow-release fertilizer around the base of the plant and mulch with well-rotted compost or manure. Fungal diseases may occur in cool, wet springs so prune out any affected parts and spray the remaining sections with fungicide.