



HOP GROWING TIPS

Here is some basic hop growing information. You can find more in depth information on-line.

Hops are vines that can grow over 20 feet through the summer. You will need a place they can climb. Set up a coarse twine for them to climb. Look for space along fences, garage, etc.

They need to be planted in a space that gets lots of sunshine and has good drainage. They prefer rich soil.

If drainage is a problem, small mounds can be built using surrounding topsoil mixed with organic matter.

The first year the hop plant has a minimal root system and requires frequent, but light watering — be careful not to drown it with too much water. Mulching the soil surface with some organic matter helps conserve moisture and control weeds.

You must wait until the risk of the last frost is over. This will vary by region, so check locally for the best date to plant.

Rhizomes can be kept in the fridge until you are ready to plant. NEVER FREEZE.

If you really want to get a head start, plant them indoors in a pot and transplant after the risk of frost has been completely eliminated (late May/early June).

Plant rhizomes horizontally about 4" deep (with the buds pointing up) and about 3 feet apart. (If they are different varieties, and you have lots of space, 4-5 feet would be even better.

Each spring apply a hearty dose of manure as a top dressing or fertilize with a balanced chemical fertilizer that is recommended for garden vegetables.

As the vines grow to about 1 foot, you should cut back the weakest shoots and leave the 4-6 strongest ones to grow.

Train them clockwise on a string that has been staked to the hill.

You might get some hops in the first season but your best harvest won't be until year 3.

Harvest hops in September just as you see signs that a few are beginning to start turning brown. The green hops should have bright yellow glands that burst and smell wonderful when you rub them together.

There is information available about drying them but don't hesitate to use them 'wet' for a unique and delicious hop flavour in your beer. They can be frozen in this form as well.

After harvest, cut the vines back to a few inches. They will start growing the next spring on their own.

Severe winters could conceivably kill the roots. (Although from experience, it doesn't happen that often). For extra protection, some people like to insulate them with a small mound of hay on top through the winter.

Happy Hopping!

