

BASIC HOPS GROWING INSTRUCTIONS

Hop Essentials:

Plenty of sun: Hops love sun. Plant your hops where they can capture direct sunlight during at least part of the day.

Well drained and fertilized soil: During the growing season hops require a lot of nitrogen. Additions of compost or traditional fertilizer when planting and subsequent spring are suggested. The hops will also require a fair amount of water throughout the growing season, but the soil should never have standing water.

Something to climb: Hops vines are annual and capable of climbing to heights of 30 feet or more. They will require a trellis, tree, fence, or hanging twine to attach their bines to and grown vertically.

Planting your hops:

Hops should be planted in the spring as soon as the ground is workable. Dig holes under where your hops are to climb 12 inches deep and 3-5 feet apart. In the bottom of each hole put some compost, fertilizer, or manure. Refill the hole and plant the rhizome 2-3 inches below the soil surface, root side down.

In a few weeks the shoots should be visible poking through the soil. Once they are long enough, wrap the shoots clockwise (viewed from the top) around their trellis or climbing wire. It is best to select a few of the strongest shoots from each plant and trim the rest.

Growing your hops:

Hops require a good amount of sun and water, and occasionally fertilizer. In the prime growing season it is not uncommon for a hop vine to grow several inches in a day. It is important that their grower keep up with their growth requirements.

Harvesting your hops:

By late August or September your hops should be ready to harvest. The part of the hop we use in brewing is the “flower” or “cone.” It can be difficult to determine exactly when your hops are ready to harvest but there are a few things we can look for. The cones should be yellowish-green and the tips will brown slightly. Also, the leaves of the cone called bracteoles should be starting to separate. You will also be able to notice the powdery yellow lupulin on the bracteoles near the stem.

Once these signs of ripeness are visible in your hops its time to harvest them. Fresh hops can be used to make “wet-hopped” beers or can be dried for storage and use in your standard recipes.

More info on growing hops can be found at: <http://www.freshops.com/gardening.html>

