



Nichols Garden Nursery

1190 Old Salem Rd. NE

Albany, OR 97321

Phone: 1-800-422-3985

NicholsGardenNursery.com



**Herbs, Seeds & Goods
For the Gardener Cook**

**Serving Home Gardeners
For 65 Years**

GROW YOUR OWN HOPS

1. Keep your hop rhizomes refrigerated until soil is ready for planting. **KEEP THE HOP ROOTS MOIST WHILE IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR.** Wrap a paper towel around the root or put sawdust, coconut fiber, potting soil or peat moss in the bag and keep moistened.

2. Plant hops in full sun.

3. Hops prefer light texture, well drained soil with a pH of 6.0 to 8.0. If drainage is a problem, build mounds in which to grow the hops. Definitely incorporate some organic matter such as manure or grass clippings into the soil. This is also a good time to add some slow release organic fertilizer such as cottonseed meal, bone meal, rock phosphate, oyster shell, etc.

4. Plant the hop rhizome vertically with buds pointing up or horizontally about 2" below the surface.

5. Plant mixed varieties at least 6 feet apart. Identical varieties can be planted as close as 3 feet apart.

6. First year baby hops have a minimal root system, therefore, the soil should not be allowed to dry completely. Mulching the soil surface with some form of organic matter does wonders in conserving moisture as well as control weeds.

SUPPORT SYSTEM

Commercial hop farm trellis hops 18-20 feet tall. A shorter trellis of 8-12 feet is better adapted for use by the home gardener. Once the hop vines reach the top of the trellis, it can be trained horizontally by hand or allowed to grow on top of the trellis. A 4 ft by 4 ft trellis that is 12 to 16 ft tall can accommodate two hop vines. If you have an arbor this size, plant one hop at each corner. By the end of summer the hop vines will create a "green" arbor. Always use strong twine because the vine can become quite heavy. Secure the taut twine to a stake at the base of the hill.

HARVEST AND DRYING

The harvest date will vary with variety and location but will become more evident as you gain experience as a hop grower. At maturity, the hops' aroma is at its strongest and can be measured by crushing the cone and smelling it. The yellow lupulin glands in the cone become much more evident and plum looking when magnified. The cone at maturity will develop a drier, papery feel along with a lightening in color. Squeeze the cones as

they develop and you will notice they become more light an resilient rather than green and hard. Your harvest date will most likely be similar to the harvest dates here in the northwest. Harvest begins the middle of August, continues until the middle of September.

Harvest is best achieved with some homebrew and help. It is easiest to cut the vine about 2 feet from the base of the hill and place the entire vine in an accessible place where picking can commence, rather than working off a ladder. Drying can be done in a food dehydrator, custom made hop dryer, well vented oven or air dried. If you use a dryer, good air flow is important and temperature should not exceed 140 degrees. Cooler temperatures take longer but a better quality hop is obtained. Under dry weather conditions, I suggest taking a screen off your house and spreading the hops thinly on the screen. Place the screen in the shade, supported at each end to keep the screen off the ground. This is best done in an enclosed area, so wind is not a problem. Fluff the cones daily so moist inner cones are brought to the outside of the pile. If the pile isn't too thick they will dry in about 3 days. The hops are dry when the strigs, the inner stems of the cones, are brittle and break rather than bend. Pack hops into a heavy plastic bag or sealable container and keep frozen until used.

DISEASES AND PESTS

The primary disease in hops is downy mildew, which is characterized by stunted, yellow shoots with leaves turning yellow then black, with spores in severe cases. Some varieties are more susceptible than others and it is more of a problem in moist spring climates as spores need free water to germinate. Downy mildew can be controlled by spraying with a fungicide. Insect pests are spider mites and aphids, mites in hot, dry weather and aphids in cool weather. Spider mites can often be controlled by dusting with diatomaceous earth or commercial pesticide. Aphids should be sprayed with an insecticidal soap spray or pesticide.