



J&L Garden Center

The All Season Gift
and Garden Center

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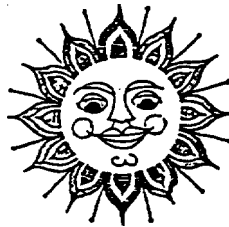
Peonies

Peonies are rated among the most beautiful of all plants, both in plant and flower. They are easy to grow and can be used in large plantings or as a single specimen plant. Peonies will produce magnificent flowers for many years with very little care. The blossoms are large, showy, have many different forms and are available in several different colors. Peonies are hardy. They will grow in almost any climate and in almost any soil. If you follow a few easy guidelines your peony will grow and bloom beautifully for many years to come.



Location

Peonies like full sun but they will tolerate a small amount of shade during the day. Peonies planted in too much shade (more than three to five hours a day) will grow but they will not bloom well. Peonies will not tolerate “wet feet”, **they must have good drainage**. Peonies would rather be kept a little too dry than a little too wet. Peonies are very drought tolerant. Water should never stand around them. Give peonies plenty of room to grow; at least three feet. **Do not crowd peonies** with other shrubs or trees that will rob moisture and nutrients from their roots. Do not plant a new peony plant where a peony plant was just removed, if the plant did not grow and bloom well. Peonies are susceptible to a soil disease that the only control is to plant a new plant in a new location: no chemical control is available for some diseases.



Soil and Fertilizer

Peonies will grow in almost any type of good garden soil but they bloom best in heavy (clay) soils. Peonies planted in clay soils grow slow but produce an abundance of blossoms. Peonies grown in sandy soils produce an abundance of leaves but not as many blossoms as a peony grown in clay soil. Fertilize peonies every spring and fall with a balanced flower fertilizer such as **6-10-4 Vegetable and Flower Food**. **Bone Meal** is a good fertilizer to use when first planting a peony but it is usually too slow acting to use during the year. Peonies can take one to three years to start blooming after planting, depending on soil fertility and other growing conditions. Do not move or divide peonies very often. Peonies usually do not need to be divided until they are at least ten years old.



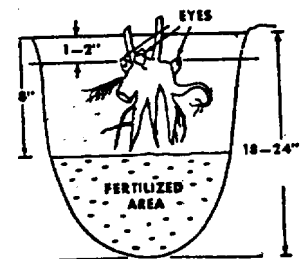
Planting Time

The best time to divide, transplant or plant new peony roots is in the fall; **mid-September through October**. Peony roots may also be planted early in the spring, but fall is the very best time. If absolutely necessary (and if you are very careful) peonies may be moved any time of the year, even when they are in full leaf and bloom. Pot-grown peonies may be planted any time of the year without any problems. Always inspect peony roots when planting. Check for any diseased areas, dry areas, or areas damaged by insects. Dust your peony roots with **Lilly Miller Bulb Dust** before planting them. Bulb dust helps to prevent many insect and disease problems.



Planting Depth

Perhaps the most common mistake made planting peonies is '**planting them too deep**'. Peonies that are planted too deep will not bloom, or the few blossoms they do produce will be underdeveloped. Plant peony roots with the “eye” a half-inch below ground level; pointed up. Do not plant peony roots upside down (you would be surprised how often this occurs). Dig a hole large enough that the roots will not be crowded. Mix 1/3 **peatmoss** and 2/3 garden soil to put back in the hole. Apply 4 to 5 tablespoons of **Blood and Bone meal** three to four inches below the peony root. Make sure you have inspected your peony roots and dusted them with **Bulb Dust** before placing your peony roots in the hole. Cover the peony roots with your soil mixture and thoroughly



water them. Mound soil over the peony the first winter for extra protection. Level the soil the following spring; so the peony won't be too deep.

Insect and Disease Problems

Peonies are fairly insect and disease free, more so than many other flowers in the garden. **Powdery Mildew** is a leaf disease that may be a problem. Prevent powdery mildew by irrigating your plants rather than sprinkling them. **Funginex** is a good spray to control mildew if your plants are infected. **Root rot** is a disease that will infect peonies. Root rot is a soil disease that is usually caused by keeping your plants too wet. Root rot will prevent your peony plants from blooming. If your plants have root rot you must discard the infected plants and plant new peony roots in a new area. There is **no chemical control for root rot**. Don't ever plant new peony roots where a peony was infected unless you remove a three foot ball of soil and replace the old soil with fresh soil.



Root maggots and root weevil are two common insects that infest peonies. These two insects will prevent peonies from blooming by eating at the roots. Drench your plants regularly with either **diazinon or dursban** if you suspect root maggots. **Root weevil** are a little harder to control than root maggots. Neither diazinon nor dursban will control root weevil. Root weevil live in the soil during the day, eating the roots, and then crawl out on the leaves after dark to eat the edges of the leaves. Spray your plants with **Orthene** (just before dark) if your plants have root weevil. Spray peonies from late-May through early August to control root weevil.



Winter Care

When peony leaves turn brown in the fall cut off the leaves and remove them. Either put the dead leaves in a compost pile or send them to the dump. **Do not let the leaves stay or rototill the dead leaves in your flower gardens;** without composting them first. Many insects and diseases live on these dead leaves during the winter. Cover newly planted roots with six inches of soil the first winter to protect them from frost. Be sure to remove this soil early the following spring. Most older plants do not need this extra protection.



Varieties

Peonies are available in many different varieties. Some varieties have a single row of petals like the Japanese peonies. Others varieties have two or three rows of petals. Some peony varieties bloom early while others bloom late. Listed below are some of the more common varieties of peonies:

Red

Officinalis rubra: Double red. Very early blooming peony, usually two weeks before other varieties. Roots are tubers, similar to dahlia roots.

Felix Crousse: Double red. Late - Mid-season. Grows medium height and has large crimson flowers.

Adolphe Rousseau: Double red. Early to mid-season. Grows tall. Has dark foliage.

Prince of Darkness: Early blooming. Medium Height. Dark maroon red.

Okinawa: Midseason Japanese peony. Single Red flowers.



Pink

Officinalis rosea: Double pink. Very early blooming peony, usually two weeks before other varieties.

Edulis superba: Double pink. Early to mid-season variety. Medium size flowers, very fragrant.

Sarah Bernhardt: Large, double pink, mildly fragrant flowers. Dark center with light pink or white edges. Blooms late.

James Mann: Large dark pink, streaked with crimson flowers. Loose & fluffy flowers. Midseason.

Constance: Large midseason Jap. Peony. Single pink flowers.



White

Solange: Double white. Blooms late. Some salmon-pink tinge. Medium height.

Festiva Maxima: Early, double white. Large flowers with pink blush and red specks, very fragrant.

Mme de Vernville: Double white. Early flowers. Crimson tips on some petals. Medium fragrance.

Albiflora: Early Japanese Peony. Large, single white petals.



Tree Peonies

Although tree peonies are not as common as garden peonies they are still a beautiful accent plant for your garden. Tree peonies need a little extra winter protection than common peonies. Mulch them well just after the ground freezes; cover them four to six inches deep with straw, leaves, or mulch. Let the ground freeze before mulching so the tree peonies will be dormant and then cover them with the mulch. Other than the extra winter protection, take care of tree peonies the same way you care for garden peonies; give them plenty of fertilizer early in the spring.

Tree peonies can grow three to four feet tall; they can even grow taller if you give them special support and protection. Tree peonies prefer full sun but they do like a little protection from the hot afternoon sun (in this area).

Tree peonies may take three to four years to start blooming after they are planted. Do not transplant tree peonies or they may even take longer to start blooming. Flowers can be up to twelve inches in diameter and can vary in form from single to fully double. Tree peonies are available in red, pink, purple, white, yellow, and bi-tone.

