

GROW PEONIES

growing peonies in your garden

BOXWOOD AVENUE

PEONY GROWING ZONES: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

HOW TO GROW PEONIES:

From a tuber: According to Sunset's Western Garden Book, dig a hole 2-3 days before planting. Work in plenty of compost or a high-phosphorus fertilizer into the soil. Plant the peony 1-2 inches deep in a nice, sunny spot with good drainage.

From an established plant: You may find yourself with a mature peony plant that is already blooming or has a large root. If this is the case, follow the directions on the planting guide. According to the Iowa extension, dig a hole about 18" deep and work a high phosphorus fertilizer or compost into the soil. Plant the peony just deep enough to be covered by 1-2" of soil in a well draining area.

Plant peonies in an area where they will receive plenty of sunlight. Be sure to water until the first freeze. After planting, the tuber will enjoy a nice cold dormancy throughout the winter, and come spring will begin to grow!

CUTTING BACK PEONIES:

The peony show is beautiful, yet short. Cut peony flowers as desired during the blooming season. Once the peonies have finished blooming, resist cutting back the plant until yellowing occurs or the first freeze comes (whichever is first). Cut the plant down to the ground and discard clippings.

HOW TO FERTILIZE PEONIES:

Peonies should be fertilized with a high phosphorus fertilizer or organic compost each spring. Be careful not to over-fertilize as it will affect the bloom abundance, and you'll be left with lots of leaves and little flowers. Feeding with too high of a nitrogen fertilizer will prevent flowering.

WHERE TO BUY PEONIES:

Purchase peony tubers from a local nursery or online.

You can purchase mature peony plants in the spring at local nurseries.

HOW TO CUT PEONY BLOOMS:

Cut peony blooms as soon as you see color on the bud or as late as full bloom.

Peony buds that have not bloomed can be preserved in the fridge for up to a month. Simply cut the bud as soon as you see color, wrap it in a paper towel or news paper and place on its side in the fridge. When you're ready to use, make a fresh cut on the stem and place in a vase filled with water to enjoy the flower!

MULCHING PEONIES:

Peonies are cold hardy and frost resistant, however during their first fall/winter, adding a layer of straw or mulch can be beneficial. Remove the mulch in the spring.

Peony Problems: Failure to Bloom

A peony can fail to bloom when it is young, so just give it a little time. After a year or two of no blooms there may be another issue. Planting too deeply can prevent flowering as can over-fertilizing. Or perhaps your plant is in competition with neighboring trees or shrubs? Lastly, too little sun will prevent flowering.