



HELLEBORE GROWING GUIDE



Climate and position

- ▶ Victoria or Tasmania is ideal climate for Hellebores. Coastal areas up to and including Sydney are suitable, inland areas ok up to Toowoomba. Heat ok, but dislike high humidity. *H. x hybridus* most adaptable variety.
- ▶ Hellebores are not troubled by cold or frost.
- ▶ Avoid very sandy soils where Hellebores usually struggle.
- ▶ Hellebores need good drainage and do not like very wet or water-logged conditions.
- ▶ In the garden Hellebores require shade in summer but good light to full sun in winter when in flower. A position under deciduous trees is ideal.

Planting

- ▶ Don't leave Hellebore in the pots you purchased them in, plant out or pot up ASAP to enable them to establish before summer.
- ▶ Hellebores are best grown in-ground, but if you want to grow in pots *H. x hybridus* varieties are best, but will require regular potting on to eventually large tubs (30-40cm).
- ▶ Plant Hellebores approx. 60cm apart. Most Hellebores grow to about 45cm tall with a spread of around 60cm.
- ▶ Prepare the ground by digging deeply and incorporate some organic matter. If looking congested, loosen the roots a little prior to planting.

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- ▶ Plants may need some extra watering over first summer in the ground. We usually find that in subsequent summers, they become quite drought tolerant.

Maintenance

- ▶ Remove old foliage of *H. x hybridus* plants right down to ground when new growth appears, typically in mid-late autumn, before flowering.
- ▶ Late autumn is also the time to feed your Hellebores. Any type of complete fertiliser is suitable provided it contains the three main nutrient elements (N, P and K). A sprinkling of dolomite lime will also be appreciated.
- ▶ If you need to move or divide *H. x hybridus* plants then this is also the right time. Dig deeply to avoid damage to the roots. Large clumps of *H. x hybridus* can be divided with a sharp spade or large knife.
- ▶ Treatment of taller species Hellebores (*H. argutifolius*, *H. foetidus*, *H. xsternii*) is a bit different. The old flowering stems should be removed in spring, after flowering has finished. Cut the old stems down to the ground. They cannot be divided, but will usually produce lots of seedlings which you can move around during winter.
- ▶ In spring mulch the plants and remove spent flowers if you don't want lots of seedlings popping up the following winter. It is a good idea to thin out/remove such seedlings to prevent plants becoming over crowded.
- ▶ Watch for aphids as the weather warms up in spring. Use whatever insecticide you prefer, but use multiple applications and spray underside of foliage.
- ▶ Hellebores usually need to be 2-3 years old before they will flower.

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