

# Planting Guide for Prima Donna hop rhizome

## Ground Planting:

### A Good Site.

A well **ventilated, sunny site** is best though some light shade during the day can help the cones to form. Avoid planting directly under or close to street lights. Hops need a freely draining soil, hence the deep planting hole.

If you are planting against a wall, position the rhizome about half a metre away or as far as space permits.

Choose a site where there is plenty of space for the hop to grow to 2.5 metres high with a spread of about a metre at that height.

Allow at least a metre (3ft) between plants.

## Digging the Planting Hole & preparing the backfill.

Dig a hole one foot square and at least two feet deep. Separate the top soil and sub soil. To prepare the backfill mix the top soil and compost (such as **John Innes No 3**) together 50% by volume.

Mix some compost with the sub soil; this depends on the relative depth of top soil to sub soil in your planting hole. Add about half of our Compost feed to this mix (the rest can go on the mound)

Mostly though you will be disposing of some sub soil, or all of it. Keep some compost back to mulch the mound.

## Positioning the Rhizome in the Planting hole.

Offer up the rhizome to establish there is sufficient depth for the long dangling roots of the rhizome. Set the rhizome with the crown, that's the thick part where the white shoots are emerging, just below ground level (about 1inch) and backfill around the roots tamping in gently. Do make sure the rhizome roots are firmly planted and the crown just emerges at ground level.

You want the 'Crown' below ground as this protects the plant from disease.

If well developed, an inch or two, remove the larger leading white shoots to slow plant down and encourage the lower buds. Then cover the crown with more backfill to form a low mound, rather like a large molehill, covering the crown to a depth of 3 -4 inches and firm up. Then mulch the mound with a layer of compost, 1- 2 inches is ample, in order to prevent rainfall washing the mound away.

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## The Mound.

The mound or hill is an important feature of cultivation of hops as it allows the rhizome to produce new rootlets, tiny white filament like roots, in a quickly warming environment.

It also allows the climbing shoots to develop in the dark before emerging from the soil close to the crown where are more readily trained up the support twine.

## Care after planting.

After planting water in and allow the rhizome to get on with the job of root formation.

Shoots will emerge in April/May.

Select the two strongest shoots – these are not usually the first ones. (You can use more but in the first year, we suggest using only 2).

Wind each **clockwise** (very gently) around your Hop Twine which is secured at ground level with a Hop Peg, tent peg or similar to your supporting structure {Wall, fence, Trellis etc}.

Once these have taken you can remove any additional shoots (and eat them!).

When watering take care to water at the ground level and not on the Bines (Leaves)

Maintain the compost mulch around the plant throughout the growing season. Ideally the compost should not touch the new bine stems.

Regular liquid applications of a high nitrogen fertiliser like Miracle Grow are beneficial while the plant is growing strongly.

When the plant goes into 'Burr' around August tomato feed or a high potash one can support cone growth.

The Compost mixture we give you should give the plant a good start until the Summer.

## Planting in Containers:

NB: You will always get **better results growing in the ground** rather than containers but it is possible but you need to work a bit harder, especially managing watering.

Watch the **Brixton Grow Beer** Planting Video for Containers:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYYUVZkuchk>

- Generally you will follow much the same as planting in the Ground, but there are specifics to do for when using containers.
- Siting as above
- Ensure your container is **large enough** and ideally plastic (Clay Pots are porous) – A minimum of 40ltrs but the larger the better as the plant will get pot bound and this will effect your harvest
- Drill holes for drainage in your container
- Fill the bottom with larger pieces of broken crockery, old pots then put on supplied gravel.
- Fill the Container with a good soil compost such as **John Inns No 3**
- Follow the instructions above **'from Positioning the Rhizome'**
- **Watering is key to success in a container.** You will be watering **more** than if the plant was in the ground and you do not want to via between 'flood to drought ' as this will stress your plant and could lead to disease setting in.
- Especially think of what happens when you go on holiday – in 2018 we had members returning from 2 weeks away in July to find dead plants because of the drought
- **Feeding.** You will need to feed more than a plant in the ground
  - o **Mulch well** – remember you can use cardboard (which will bio-degrade) as a top layer to keep moisture in.
  - o If you have a deeper container (such as an 80ltr old dust-bin) consider using a buried plastic bottle with the bottom cut off to get water deeper down

- Remember Container can **get too hot** especially if it is in full sun – you don't want to cook your rhizome so use other pots and plants around the base of your container to create **shade** for the pot and a micro-climate
- Post Harvest you will need to ensure that the compost is not too compressed and need to top dress with new compost.
- You need to ensure good drainage in your container – so large holes, gravel at the bottom and raised off the surface of the ground. You will need to check that is all ok after the harvest as you do not want to get waterlogged containers over winter as this will rot the rhizome.
- After year 2 you will need to totally renew the compost when the plant is dormant (around Nov-Jan) and check that it is not too root bound.

*Many Thanks to our colleagues in the **Farnham Hoppers** (in Surrey) for the instructions*