

PEONIES

What You'll Need:	
Essential Items	Desirable Items
Soil Enhancer	Wire cage, grid, or stakes
Root Stimulator	T&C Fruit & Flower Food
Bone Meal	Sulfur



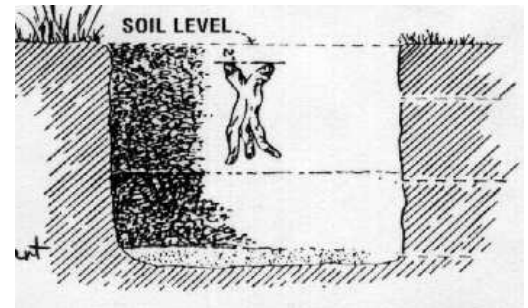
Where to plant

Select a sunny, well-drained location for your peonies. They will tolerate some shade, but should have at least 6 hours of sunshine. The best blooms are usually found on plants growing in full sunlight. Do not plant near large trees or heavy shrubs where they would be robbed of necessary moisture and plant food. Plants may be spaced from two to four feet apart according to effect desired.

If you wish to develop large specimen clumps, space them four feet apart. Peonies prefer a soil that tests 6.5 pH, but seem to do well in soils with a pH up to 7.5. Add Soil Sulfur to lower pH.

How to plant

1. Dig a hole 18 inches deep and 18 inches wide.
2. Mix **T&C Soil Enhancer** 50/50 with soil for backfill.
3. Add ¼ cup **Bone Meal** or **Super Phosphate** to the soil and place this soil into the bottom of the hole and around the root ball (or bare root).
4. Plant the peony so that the eyes are **not over 2 inches below the soil surface**, adding soil as needed to bring it to the proper level. Planting too deeply is a common cause of peonies failing to bloom.
5. Water thoroughly with **Root Stimulator** according to directions.



Fertilizing

If your ground has been properly enriched at planting time, you should feed on more than once per year in the spring with **T&C Fruit & Flower Food** or **Save-a-Tree**. Keep all fertilizer away from the crowns of the plants. There are no feeding roots there. Spread it over the area where the roots grow, from six to eighteen inches from the crown and thoroughly incorporate it with the soil. Fertilize with discretion. Over-fertilized plants will not bloom well and soon run their course.

Watering

Water your peony plants immediately after planting so that the soil settles well around the roots. During the spring months, there is usually enough moisture in the ground for peony plants, but if several weeks pass without rain, give them a good watering. Then water whenever the soil is dry ½ inch below the surface.

Dividing

The best time to divide the peony is late September to early October. Here are a few tips for successful peony division and planting.

1. Cut plant stems down to ground level.
2. Carefully dig plants and shake gently to remove soil.
3. Cut clump into sections making sure that each section has about 5 eyes (sprouts) and a portion of the root system.

Staking

Peony blossoms can often be so large and heavy that they break down the stems of the plant. It is wise to place a cage, grid, or other support system around plants to help hold them up. This may not be required until the year after planting.

Winter protection

Newly planted peonies should be given winter protection for the first winter after planting. After the ground is frozen in fall, give them a covering of mulch such as Soil Pep about three to six inches deep. This covering will protect the plants against heaving due to alternate thawing and freezing. Remove the covering early in spring. Established plants need no winter protection.

After the first heavy frost when the foliage has turned brown in fall, cut the plants down as near to the ground as possible. Burn or discard all the old stems and leaves as a protection against disease.

Tree Peonies

The name "Tree Peony" is misleading. They differ from herbaceous peonies in that they are dwarf, slow growing, woody shrubs. Their branches do not die down in the fall and should not be cut to the ground as is done with herbaceous peonies. Tree peonies should be grown and treated as a shrub around the home garden landscape.

Given time and proper care, tree peonies will develop into spectacular specimens four to six feet wide and generally four feet tall. Older specimens can produce fifty to two hundred blooms per plant and the attractive foliage is definitely an asset to the garden landscape.



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