

blackmoor

Blackmoor

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Dear Customer,

Thank you for ordering from Blackmoor Nurseries. We trust you will be pleased with your plants and by following our growing guide below we hope you have many years of success with them. Our plants have been professionally grown on our Nursery with the correct attention to nutrients, and pest and disease control. They are despatched in good condition ready to establish and thrive in your garden for many years to come.

Please unpack and inspect your plants immediately on arrival.

CARE GUIDE FOR RHUBARB

Establishing the Rhubarb Bed: A new rhubarb bed is best raised from divisions planted out in November, although it can be set out as late as March. Old crowns should be split, using a spade, into wedge shaped pieces with two or three buds on the outer edge, the inner part can usually be pared away with a knife (although old crowns are often hollow). Many growers, especially older ones, say that you should always leave the crowns on the surface to expose them to a hard frost before splitting them.

Please note: Do not pre-soak the bare root crowns prior to planting as they are liable to rot.

Rhubarb is not fussy as to soil but should be planted in slightly raised beds if the soil is very heavy. It does however need an open site, as it will not tolerate shade. Prepare the soil carefully by digging to two spits (spade depths), the roots go deep, and work in plenty of farmyard manure or compost as you go. In choosing a site remember that the leaves are heavy and reach at least 2 feet (60 cm) all round the crown. Set the divisions 21/2-3 ft (75-90 cm) apart with the buds at or just below the surface.

It is strongly recommended that you should not gather any sticks in the first year of a new rhubarb bed. The first good crop will come in the second or third year following planting.

Growing Rhubarb: Once you have established your plants the first basic principle of Rhubarb growing is that plants should be kept dry in winter and moist in summer. A covering of leaves applied in October and removed in February will help in winter and a mulch of compost, leaf mould or farmyard manure applied in April will keep moisture in the soil during the summer. Always make sure, however, that the soil is thoroughly moist *before* applying this summer mulch. If in doubt, always water well in dry seasons.

The second basic principle is to remember that Rhubarb is essentially a leaf crop (no leaves, no stems) and that leaf crops need nitrogen. If you use farmyard manure for your summer mulch additional nitrogen will probably not be needed but a light dressing of nitrogenous fertiliser in March is recommended.

An established bed needs little attention beyond feeding and watering. You must, however, remove flower spikes as they appear and clear away dead leaves throughout summer and autumn. The heavy foliage smothers most weeds. The only serious diseases are viruses, which make the plant yellow and weak - these are incurable and affected plants should be destroyed. Slugs can be a problem - they seldom make serious attacks on the Rhubarb itself, but use the Rhubarb bed as a home from which to decimate other crops.

A well-planted Rhubarb bed will yield a satisfactory crop for ten or twelve years until the crowns get too many small buds. They should then be lifted, divided and replanted - leaving some crowns untouched to ensure continuity of supply.

Forcing Rhubarb: Rhubarb can be forced by lifting crowns in November and potting them up to be grown in the cellar, beneath the greenhouse staging or more simply by putting a bucket over the crowns in January.

Generally speaking Rhubarb is best harvested for a period of four months from the time you take the first sticks. Three months if you have forced crowns.

This guide is for general information purposes only as site and soil conditions and requirements vary greatly.