



# ALMANAC

Thursday, May 1, 2025



**ORDER YOUR ALMANAC TODAY!**

[HOME](#) > [GARDENING](#) > [GROWING GUIDES](#)

# How to Grow Hops



Photo Credit: Pixabay

Bo *Humulus*  
tan s  
ica *lupulus*  
I  
Na  
me  
:

Pla Vine  
nt  
Ty  
pe:

Su Full Sun  
n  
Ex  
po-  
sur  
e:

FREE GUIDE!

pH

:

Blo Summe

om r

Ti

me

:

Flo Green,

we Yellow

r

Col

or:

Ha 4, 5, 6,

rdi- 7, 8, 9

ne

ss

Zo

ne:

# Planting, Growing, and Pruning Hops

By Catherine Boeckmann

Last Updated: August 22, 2024



Sign up for daily gardening advice and tips

Enter your email address



**The Almanac Garden Planner -****Use It Free for 7 Days!**

Plan your 2025 garden with our award-winning Garden Planner.

[TRY NOW](#)

Looking to brew your own beer? One key flavoring ingredient is hops, which you can grow in your backyard! Here's how to plant, grow, and harvest hops at home.

ADVERTISEMENT

Hops (*Humulus lupulus*) is a vine plant in the *Cannabinaceae* family. It produces annual shoots called “bines,” which grow from underground rhizomes. Often, these bines grow over 10 inches per day, climbing along trellis systems that can reach over 20 feet. The female flowers that form are surrounded by a green cone called a “hop.”



Inside the cones or hops are golden grains that form a sticky yellow powder called lupulin. This powder harbors alpha acids and many oils, which provide the aroma and flavoring used in brewing.



The yellow lupulin on a hop's cone.

Credit: Baldurmen

Home brewing has a long history; some anthropologists believe that beer is as old as civilization itself. Brewing was often a sacred ceremony; every culture has stories concerning fermentation and its ability to heal, nourish, and inebriate. In Elizabethan times, water was not fit to

## ADVERTISEMENT

While hops are the most popular ingredient for the home brewer, many other brewing crops can be grown at home, including grains, fruit, and flavorful herbs.

Learn more about the [connection between gardening and home brewing](#).

**Read Next**

- [Gardening and Home Brewing](#)
- [Having a Vine Time with Perennial Vines](#)
- [How to Make Kombucha Tea—It's Easy!](#)

## PLANTING

- Hops need a minimum of 120 frost-free days to flower and produce a good crop.
- During the first year, the plant is establishing its root system, and only a few flowers are produced. In the second year, the plant will produce a normal crop of hops.

## Choosing and Preparing a Planting Site

- Hops need a strong trellis system for the bines (the technical term for hops' "vines") to climb on. Bines can grow to over 25 feet and weigh over 20 pounds.
- Soil needs to be loose (well-aerated by turning over several times). It should also be well-draining; hops don't like to have consistently wet roots.
- Add aged manure or compost to the soil before planting.

## How to Plant Hops

- Commercial hops are propagated via root cuttings or rhizomes, not from seeds. This ensures that desired

- In the home garden, hops are best planted in hills. Space the hills at least 3 feet apart. In large-scale operations, they are often grown in rows and allowed to twine up wires (see picture below).
- Plant two rhizomes per hill with the buds pointing up and the roots of the rhizome down.
- Dig a hole that's about twice as wide as the pot and as deep.
- Place the plant in the hole and backfill. Be sure to plant the hops plant no deeper than it was in its pot.
- Water deeply at the time of planting.
- Cover the hills with some straw or light mulch to control weeds.



Early season hop yard in Washington state. Credit: Williamburg

## How to Grow Hops

- In the first year, hop plants may require frequent light watering to help them get established.
- Mature plants will benefit from regular watering if rainfall is sparse.
- Hops need plenty of water, but should not be waterlogged. This is why well-draining soil is important.
- In the first year, the focus should be on allowing the plants to develop their root system, so refrain from pruning or removing any foliage or bines. After the plant is established, select 2 to 6 bines from each hill and train them up a support. Unused bines can be pruned off or stuck into the soil and allowed to produce rhizomes for new plants.
- Train the bines to climb on a trellis or other support system. Hops can be grown by wrapping the bines around twine or wire that has been staked in the ground and attached to the side of a building, fence, or other support. Bines naturally twine clockwise, so be sure to wrap them in the

- Make sure to support the lateral branches to prevent tangling.
- Most flower cones are produced on the upper part of the lateral branches and should be ready for harvesting in late summer.



Fully-grown hops. Credit: Marti

## How to Propagate Hops

- At the end of the season, bury a few healthy bottom bines in the soil for propagating new plants in the following spring.
- Bury the bines in a shallow trench and mark their location.
- In spring, dig up the bines and cut them into pieces about 4 inches long. Make sure each new cutting has an eye or bud.
- Plant the cuttings in hills

- ‘**Willamette**’ has vigorous bines that yield small to medium-size cones. The hops are aromatic with fruity notes.
- ‘**Nugget**’ has pale greenish-yellow flowers in late summer. It is winter hardy to Zone 2. The hops have a strong aroma with herbal notes.
- ‘**Centennial**’ is a great classic hop with nice citrus tones and clean floral taste. It’s often used in pale ales and IPAs. It has medium-sized green cones that can be harvested in August.
- ‘**Cascade**’ produces well in hot southern regions. It is fast-growing and has medium-sized green cones. The hops have unique floral, spicy and citrus character.

## HARVESTING

### When to Harvest Hops

- Harvest hops at the end of the growing season—usually late summer.
- Squeeze the flower cones to see if they have started to dry out.
- Let the bines dry on the support sys-

down on the ground to dry before pulling off the cones.

- Finish drying the cones on screens in the sun or in a well-ventilated room.

# How to Store Hops

- For the freshest flavor, store the dried cones in airtight containers or vacuum-sealed bags in the freezer or refrigerator until ready to use.

# GARDENING PRODUCTS



# **PESTS/DISEASES**

- **Downy Mildew**
- **Verticillium Wilt**
- **Viruses:** Viruses may cause tip dieback, yellow spots on the leaves, stunted growth, and failure to climb on the support. Affected plants should be removed and destroyed. Rootstock purchased from a reliable source is unlikely to have virus problems.

## **WIT AND WISDOM**

- Hops have a soporific effect, and the flowers have long been used in dream pillows to induce sleep.
- Hops can grow up to 12 inches a day.
- Hop bines always twist in a clockwise direction.
- Each hop cone consists of 60 individual flowers surrounded by bracts.
- One hop plant can survive up to 50 years in the wild.

## **COOKING NOTES**

Young hop shoots in the spring are deli-

**VINES**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### Catherine Boeckmann



Catherine Boeckmann loves nature, stargazing, and gardening so it's not surprising that she and The Old Farmer's Almanac found each other. She leads digital content for the Almanac website, and is also a certified master gardener in the state of Indiana. [Read More from Catherine Boeckmann](#)

## MORE LIKE THIS



Gardening and  
Home Brewing  
With Perennial  
Vines



Having a Vine  
Time with  
Perennial  
Vines



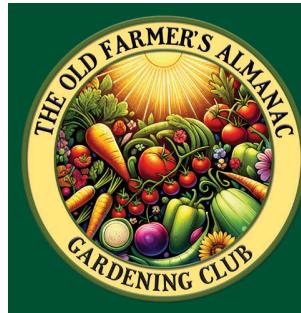
How to Make  
Kombucha Tea  
—It's Easy!



**How to Grow a  
Tea Garden  
(And 10 Herbs  
to Plant)**

**What's that  
Weed?  
Common  
Garden Weed  
Identification  
(with Photos)**

**How to Get Rid  
of Poison Ivy,  
Poison Oak,  
Kudzu, and  
Mesquite**



**GROW YOUR BEST GARDEN YET**  
Join The Old Farmer's Almanac  
Gardening Club Today!

**LEARN MORE**

ADVERTISEMENT

## COMMENTS

**ADD A COMMENT**

---

**Anne (not verified)** 1 year 10 months ago

WIT AND WISDOM Thanks for the info

Farmer's Almanac !!!

Hops have a soporific effect, and the flowers  
have long been used in dream pillows to induce  
sleep.

ADVERTISEMENT

Hops can grow up to 12 inches a day.  
Hop bines always twist in a clockwise direction.  
Each hop cone consists of 60 individual flowers  
surrounded by bracts.

One hop plant can survive up to 50 years in the  
wild. I'd like to grow Hops for Tea-making-ty!!!

**REPLY**

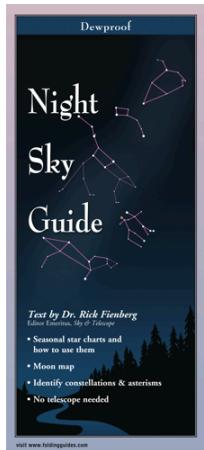
**The Editors** 1 year 10 months ago

Anne-

Thanks for your comments, we wish  
you great success growing your hops!

[REPLY](#)

# THE OLD FARMER'S STORE



Night Sky, Folding Guide

\$9.95

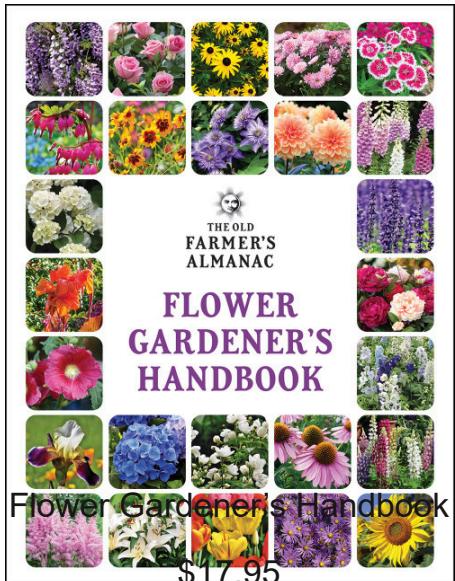
[BUY NOW](#)



Big Wooly Dust Mop with Tele...

\$49.95

[BUY NOW](#)



Flower Gardener's Handbook  
\$17.95



Handy Hoe

\$19.99

## ADVERTISEMENT

**Our Brands**

[The Old Farmer's Almanac for Kids](#)  
[Yankee Magazine](#)  
[Family Tree Magazine](#)  
[NH Business Review](#)  
[New Hampshire Magazine](#)  
[Yankee Custom Marketing](#)

**Resources**

[About Us](#)  
[Contact Us](#)  
[Free Daily Newsletter](#)  
[Webcam](#)  
[Advertise with Us](#)  
[Media Relations](#)  
[Sell the Almanac](#)  
[Where to Buy](#)  
[Terms of Use](#)  
[Privacy Policy](#)  
[Cookie List](#)  
[Do Not Sell or Share](#)  
[My Personal Information](#)

**Connect with Us**

©2025 [Yankee Publishing Inc.](#), An Employee-Owned Company