

HOW TO GROW BEGONIAS

Begonias are tender perennials that are quite attractive, easy-to-care flowers that are perfect for container pots or hanging baskets which usually grow 8-15 inches tall and wide. It is estimated that there are about 1,500 species and several thousand hybrids. These plants are native to tropical regions including Central and South America, Africa and Asia. To achieve success in cultivating them, there are 3 general rules that need to be followed. First, they are not cold-tolerant. Second, they prefer even moisture rather than being wet. Third, generally, they do not thrive in harsh sunlight. Although they don't last more than one growing season, they are worth investing your time and efforts.

Planting Procedure:

Step 1: Preparing to Plant

- A. It is recommended to purchase small potted begonia at local garden centres since seed-started begonias and bulb begonias are quite difficult to grow.
- B. Choose a spot that has light or dappled shade in the garden such as a shady patch that is partially covered by larger plants.
- C. Begonias prefer acidic, well-draining environments that peat moss mixture provides.
- D. Spring is the best time to plant them as they cannot handle cold temperatures and frost. Since they are annuals, you have to replant them every year.



Step 2: Planting your Begonias.

A. Dig a hole a few inches deep that would be large enough to cover the root ball of a potted plant. Since they don't take up much space, you can plant them closely with other plants in your garden.

B. Place the begonia plant in the hole and cover the top of the root ball with few inches of soil/potting mixture. You may slightly break apart the root ball prior to placing it in the hole.

C. After planting the begonias, provide adequate water to keep the soil moist.

D. Check for weeds every few days and pull them out especially if they are planted in the garden. Try mulching the garden to trap moisture and prevent new weeds from sprouting.

E. When you see begonia flowers becoming brown, you may cut and pull off dead flower head known as deadheading to promote new growth.



F. Be wary of pests hovering your begonias. To ward off slugs and snails, you may place crushed eggshells at the base of the plant.

G. After some time, begonias will thrive and you may pick these flowers for home decor.

H. Once cold season sets in, you can save them bringing them indoors and placing them in windows that receives lots of sunlight.

I. During winter season, you can save the bulbs from the begonias to replant the following spring. Pull all major stems/leaves from the bulb when the plant has completely turned brown. Place them in a screen in a cool, dry area to dry out for 5-7 days. Once totally dry, store them in cardboard box full of dry peat moss.

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