



7 Steps to Growing Your Own Hops

1. When to Buy

Purchase rhizomes in March to April. Once you receive your baby hop roots, keep them in the refrigerator until it's time to plant.

2. Choosing and Preparing the Site

Choose a south facing site with good drainage (poor drainage will rot the roots), plenty of sun and height to grow. Be prepared to support the bines (vines) as they grow to heights as tall as 8' -16' or more. If you do not trail the bines they will create a wild bush, which is also pretty.

Prepare the soil with a lot of organic compost before planting. Hops prefer a slightly acidic soil so be sure to check your soil and adjust before planting.

3. When and How to Plant

Plant the rhizomes once the ground has thawed and frost has past.

Plant hops rhizomes (root stems) in early spring, a few inches deep and about 36 - 42 inches apart, with the brown rootlets pointing down. Water with a drip-irrigation system or soaker hose to reach the roots instead of merely wetting the leaves. Once the shoots are a foot tall, cut all but two of them per plant and wrap the remaining ones clockwise around the trellis or twine.

4. Maintenance of Hop Plants

Nurture your growing plants with frequent light waterings. Your goal is to provide enough water to help the plant establish its roots, but not so much that the rhizomes start to rot. Once the first shoots break the surface of the soil (2–4 weeks after planting), things will start moving quickly—it's not uncommon for plants to grow up to a foot (30 cm) per day at the height of summer!

Hops are susceptible to mildew and aphids. Keep an eye out and take action as needed. For aphids, Lady Bugs and Praying Mantis are usually available at local nursery's and are fun to have around. Ask your local nursery about how to manage mildew in your area.



Support the hops vines as they grow. Hops prefer to grow vertically. Effective support methods range from simple lengths of sturdy twine to sophisticated trellis systems. Just make sure that whatever you choose is strong enough to hold a full-grown, heavy plant: Commercial hops farms feature trellises as tall as 20 feet (6 meters).

5. Harvesting Hops

By late August or early September, the cones will lighten in color and begin to dry and feel papery. These visual and tactile clues are your indication that it's time to harvest. Once you've made the decision to harvest, simply snip the top of the twine that the plant has climbed and lay the vine flat on the ground (if your hops grow on a trellis, you can leave the vines in place as you harvest the cones).

Pick the cones from the vine and either use them straight away (within 24 hours) in a wet-hopped beer or dry them for future use. Leave the vines attached to the plant until the first frost, then cut the plants about a foot (30 cm) above the ground and discard the vines in preparation for winter.

6. Using Your Hops

Use fresh or wet hops within 24 hours or dry your hops immediately if you plan to save them for later. A food dehydrator can do the job, but many home growers build makeshift racks to handle the harvest. You can alternate window screens, air filters, or chicken wire with single layers of hops and blow air over the rig with a box fan. You're aiming for brittle, papery-feeling hops cones with stems that snap when bent. A warm garage is an ideal location in which to dry hops because it's out of the sun but hot enough (without being too hot) to encourage rapid dehydration.

7. Storing Your Hops

Store your dried homegrown hops as you would store any other hops. Vacuum seal them to keep oxidation at bay and freeze them to preserve freshness. Well-stored hops should remain good for at least a year.

Enjoy!