

# Ison's Nursery & Vineyard

## Planting Instructions

### **RHUBARB Planting Instructions**



Rhubarb Crowns should be planted while they are dormant which is through the fall, winter and into early spring.

#### **Location:**

Rhubarb grows best in full sun but will tolerate partial shade. Rhubarb produces a harvest for up to 8 years, so grow it in a sunny area where it will go undisturbed for a long time.

Choose a site with soil that is well-draining and fertile. Good drainage is essential, as rhubarb will rot if kept too wet. Mix compost, rotted manure, or anything high in organic matter into the soil. Rhubarb plants are heavy feeders and need this organic matter.

Soil pH is not critical, though rhubarb will grow best in a slightly acidic to neutral range (6.0–7.0). Rhubarb gets big! It can grow to 2-3 feet tall and wide. Make sure you choose a site where it will not be crowded.

Before planting, eliminate all perennial weeds in the planting site.

#### **HOW TO PLANT**

Dig large, bushel-basket-size holes. Space rhubarb plants about 4 feet apart and plant the roots 1 to 3 inches below the surface of the soil, with buds facing up. Water well at the time of planting.

Mulch generously with a heavy layer of straw to retain moisture and discourage weeds. Water your plant well and consistently. Rhubarb needs sufficient moisture, especially during the hot, dry days of summer.

Each spring, apply a light sprinkling of a fertilizer (10-10-10). Overcrowding is common problem with rhubarb and can lead to subpar growth. Dig and split rhubarb roots every 3 to 4 years. Divide when plants are dormant in early spring (or late fall). Divisions should have at least one large bud on them.

In the fall, remove all plant debris. Once your ground freezes, it's best to cover rhubarb with 2 to 4 inches of an organic mulch. By adding nitrogen to the soil, you are preparing the rhubarb plants for a good spring season.

#### **Harvest and Storage:**

The second year after planting, harvest lightly, removing only a few stalks from each plant. From the third year on, harvest stems freely. To ensure continued production, take care not to remove more than one-third to one-half the stalks from any one plant during any one harvest.

**To harvest**, choose stems that are 12 to 18 inches long and reddish in color. Grasp the stalk near the base and pull it upwards, twisting the stem as you pull. You can also use a sharp knife to slice stems from the plant. Cut as close to the crown as possible without damaging it. After harvesting, remove the leafy portion and the base of the stem, leaving only the colored stalk.

Early spring stems offer the most flavor and tenderness; they are ideal for pies. Stems harvested later in the season tend to be tougher, so reserve them for stewing, sauces, or jams.

Stop harvesting as stems get shorter and thinner. At this point, plants are storing up energy for next year's harvest. Mature plants typically provide an 8- to 10-week harvest. In general, expect 2 to 3 pounds of stalks per mature plant per season.