



# Growing Your Own Hops

Do you want to take your Home Brewing to the next level? One of the basic ingredients in beer is also very easy to grow. Hops will thrive in most moderate climates. Learning how to plant and care for Hops is easy and rewarding.

The Hop Plant is a hardy perennial plant. It will grow vines annually from the root stock. These vines will grow up to 25 feet each season and die back after the harvest. The Rhizome is part of the root stock but posses the buds for propagation. Under good conditions, each Hop Vine will produce 1/2 to 2 pounds of dried flowers.



## Steps to Growing Your Own Hops

1. Choose which Hop Variety you would like to grow. [Adventures in Homebrewing](#) has over 25 Hop Rhizomes to choose from. Order your Rhizomes so that you are ready to plant in the late Spring, after the last frost.

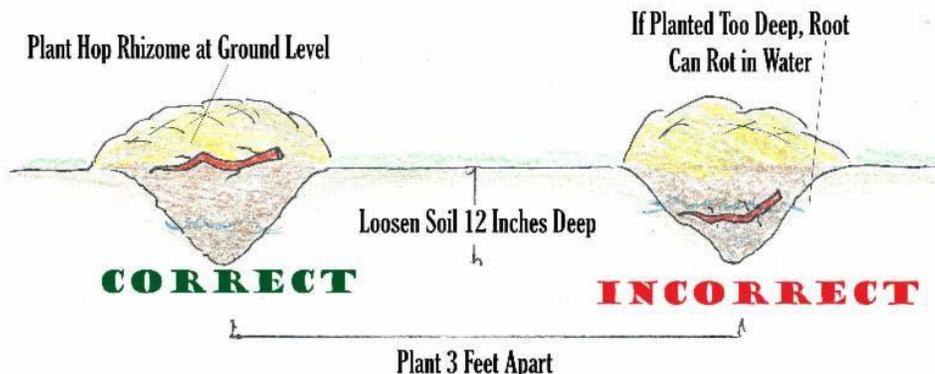
- Upon obtaining the rhizomes, they should be stored in a plastic bag slightly moistened in a refrigerator.

2. Choose the location in which you want to Plant your Hops. The area you choose will need to get at least 6-8 hours of direct sunlight every day. In addition to needing sunlight, your plant will also need the following:

- Hops will grow on bines. (A *bine* is a climbing plant which climbs by its shoots, it is distinct from a vine, which climbs using tendrils or suckers.) Hops need vertical space. The bines can stretch 25 feet or longer into the air. Possible ways to grow your hops are on a tall trellis near your house, or a tall pole with [Hop Twine](#).
- Hops that you plant will grow well on an 18 foot trellis and can grow vigorously limited to just 12 - 15 feet of trellis.
- The spot you choose will also need to have good drainage.

3. Prepare your soil before you plant your Rhizomes.

- The soil should be loose and free from large clumps. Remove any debris, such as stones and weeds. Remove any weeds by the root to prevent them from growing again. Fertilize the soil with Bone Meal or Blood Meal and make the soil is loose and worked at least 12 inches deep.
- Create a mound of soil for each rhizome that you will be planting.
- The mounds should be spaced about 3 feet apart, so the hops have plenty of room to grow.



- if you plan to grow more than one variety of Hops, plant the mixed varieties at least 5 feet apart.

#### 4. Plant the Hop Rhizome.

- Dig a 4-inch hole in each mound and lay the rhizome into the hole horizontally, with the root side down. Loosely pack the soil down over the plant, then cover with straw or mulch to prevent weed growth. Keep the soil consistently moist until the vines begin to sprout.

#### 5. When the vines emerge, they should grow about 6 inches. At this point they need to be "trained". Gently wrap the vines around Hop Twine or a Trellis.

- You will need to continue training the vines for a few days. They will begin growing clockwise around the trellis grow vertically on their own.



- Don't be afraid to remove damaged or weak shoots. This will allow the healthy vines more room to grow and flourish. You will want between 4 and 6 health vines growing from each plant.

- After a few months of growth, trim the leaves off the bottom 2 feet of the vines. This prevents the plants from getting damaged by diseases or fungus.

#### 6. Care for your new plants.

- The vines will begin to grow tall and strong. It is important to keep the soil around the plants free from weeds. Water the hops every day so that the soil stays moist, but not drenched. Continue caring for the hops in this way until late summer, when it's time to harvest them.

#### 7. Harvest the Hops.



- The harvest date will vary depending on your location and your season. It is safest to lower the vines in order to pick the flowers.
- Gently twist the ripe hop cones off as they ripen. If some ripen more quickly than others, leave the ones on the vine that still need time to ripen.
- Once you cut the vines, lay them down flat and pull off the cones.

#### 8. Dry the Hops

- Place the ripe hops on a flat surface out of sunlight. Lay them only a single layer deep. After they lay like this and begin to dry, flip them over to allow the other side to dry. Continue this process until drying is complete.
- The Hops are done drying when the inner stem (string) is brittle and breaks as opposed to bending. Pack the hops in an airtight container and freeze until they are to be used.

***Growing your own hops is rewarding and exciting. Adventures in Homebrewing can help you get started in this great part of the hobby.***