



Time and Hints to Take Home

Begonias

The showy Begonia plants and baskets that Plant Land sells are simple to grow from Begonia tubers that can be saved from year to year. They are very satisfying to grow yourself. Here are some instructions and tips for success.

Selecting Tubers: Tubers are available in early February. Choose large, firm tubers with no signs of softness or rot. Upright varieties are good for pots that will be on the ground or floor while cascading varieties are best for hanging baskets. Plant Land's 10" pots contain three tubers while 6" pots hold just one. Plan to plant the tubers shortly after you purchase them.

Start Tubers in Flats: Full development of roots is a crucial step in growing beautiful Begonias. Wait until pink buds appear on the tubers before planting. Until then, store them in a paper bag in a warm, dry spot. Once they have buds, fill a nursery flat that has drainage holes with a mix of 2/3 potting soil and 1/3 peat moss. Place the tubers concave side up and cover with 1/2" of the soil mix. Water thoroughly and keep moist but not soggy. Put the flat in bright, filtered light (NOT direct sunlight). Warm temperatures of 65°F to 75°F will encourage growth.

Transplanting: When the first two leaves have reached equal development, the plant will tolerate being transplanted into its final container. Use the same mix of potting soil and peat moss. Handle the plants gently and plant them about 2" deep.

Location: Put your Begonias in strong light but shield them from direct sun. They must stay inside until all danger of frost is past

Watering & Fertilizing: Water only when the surface soil starts to dry out. Check soil by hand to determine wetness. Apply water to the soil surface only and avoid getting water on the leaves. Water deeply and thoroughly so the soil is evenly moist. Be careful not to

get the soil soggy. Begonias can be very prone to rot if they are too wet. Feed your Begonias weekly with a half strength solution of 20-20-20 water-soluble plant food.

Once Your Begonias are Ready to Go Outside:

Select a site that offers light but not direct sun. Protect them from direct wind but choose an area with good air circulation. If you are planting them in the ground, space them at least a generous 12" apart.

Watering & Fertilizing: Check your Begonias for water every day. They need to be kept evenly moist but never soggy. Feed every two weeks with bloom booster water-soluble food, 10-50-10, at full strength. Continue feeding throughout the growing season until September.

Care of Mature Plants: Periodic grooming to remove damaged leaves and dead flowers helps keep the plant healthy and producing more flowers. Plants that get long and leggy can be pruned back slightly to improve their appearance. In hot weather, Begonias need to be checked for water daily.

After Bloom Care: When the plant turns yellow and begins to fall apart (usually in late fall), it is time to stop watering and allow the tuber to go dormant. Let the plant go through at least one hard freeze. Dig up the tubers and clean off all dirt and debris. Put them in a sunny window for several days to dry out. Remove any trace of old stems. When thoroughly dry, layer the tubers in a paper bag (not plastic) with vermiculite or dry sawdust. Store them in a cool, dry place. You can dust the tubers with bulb dust to prevent some kinds of diseases. Check the tubers occasionally and throw away any that show signs of rot. Plant them again in early February and enjoy your Begonias year after year!!

