

RHUBARB



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Garden rhubarb (*Rheum rhabarbarum* or *Rheum x hybridum*) is a perennial vegetable. It dies to the ground in the fall and shoots up new growth every spring. It becomes a large plant, so space each root 3' to 4' apart when planting. Rhubarb likes sun but will tolerate very light shade. It prefers high organic, well-drained soil. Plant each root in a mixture of good black soil, manure, and peat moss. Make sure each root has at least one eye (bud) and plant the eye 2" below soil level. Keep the plant moderately moist.

Do not harvest any stalks the first year after transplanting. The plant will need to store nutrients in the root for successive year's growth. You can harvest the second year if the stalks are large enough. Pull, don't cut. Pull only fully grown stems and leave 3-4 strong stems per plant.

Don't eat the leaves as they contain high levels of oxalic acid and are poisonous.

Don't harvest after July 1 so that there will be time for the roots to store food for next year's growth. Remove the flower/seed stems as soon as they appear. Remove dying leaves in the fall.

Each spring, apply a fertilizer such as 10-10-10 and each fall work in manure. Divide old plants every 5-8 years in the fall or spring just after new growth starts.

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