

# The Vernon Nursery

where plants come to life



## Growing the Vernon's Way

Full growing instructions for your garden plants

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# You've received your new plants

For nearly 40 years The Vernon Nursery has been growing a wide range of beautiful plants to bring colour to gardens across the UK. We've learnt a lot in that time and want to share all of our tips and expertise with you, so that you can enjoy the best success with your plants once they are in your garden.

## Follow these simple steps to start growing your plants ...

1. On receipt of your plants stand them upright and make sure they are just moist. For plug plants use **steps 2 to 5** below - for bare roots and other plant types see their individual advice further on.
2. Pot up the plants into 9cm pots or large-cell modular trays. Use a general purpose compost, which is easily available, but do NOT use bark based composts as these hold too much moisture for most plants. Add our plant food (p7) to the compost at this stage.
3. Make sure the plants are moist at all times but not waterlogged. When they are small they have a little root system so it is only as they grow bigger that they will need more water.
4. Place the plants in a sunny, frost-free place – the warmer and drier the better. You will get the best results if you can provide your plants with summer conditions in spring – so a dry, light, bright place will make them happier. If you don't have a greenhouse or conservatory then a sunny windowsill will be absolutely fine.
5. Planting out your summer plants is best done from mid-May onwards, but do watch your local weather reports - once it is warm enough plant out and enjoy the show!

## Summer display plants

This includes the **Trailing Petunia (and Surfinia types) Verbena, Begonia, Colour Basket Duos, Colour Combinations, Sunflower 'Inca Gold'** and **all hanging basket plants**.

For all your summer display plants follow the easy care instructions above in **steps 1 to 5** and they will thrive and put on a great show of colour for you. Feeding and watering are the most important aspects of getting the best from your summer display plants so add our plant food (p7) to the compost. Pack plants into your baskets and containers - the more the merrier and the more plants there are, the more flowers to enjoy!

## Summer bedding plants

This advice is for **ALL summer bedding plants** from our wide selection which includes: **Busy Lizzie/New Guinea Impatiens, Petunia, Begonia, Gerbera, Bedding Geranium, Marigold, Dahlia, Lobelia, Antirrhinum, Celosia, Summer Pansy, Salvia, Stocks, Rudbeckia, Verbena** and **Zinnia**.

Pot up your bedding plants into small pots and grow them on in warm frost-free conditions for transplanting later on. They are best grown in groups so you can put several in a pot to start them off and then plant them up in groups. Water sparingly until plugs are fully rooted into their pots. When all risk of frost has passed, acclimatise bedding plants to outdoor conditions over 7 to 10 days. Add our plant food (p7) to the compost when planting and water frequently throughout summer to ensure an endless supply of flowers.

## Sweet Peas

Pot up and grow on sweet pea plants in cool, bright conditions until large enough to transplant outdoors. Pinch out the growing tips of sweet pea plants while they are still small, to encourage bushy growth. When plants are well grown transplant them outdoors into any fertile, well drained garden soil in full sun or semi-shade. Feed and water regularly throughout the growing season. When growing sweet peas it is essential to cut the flower stems frequently and deadhead faded blooms to prevent seedpods developing. This will encourage more blooms to be produced and extend the flowering period through summer. **Caution:** Sweet pea seeds are harmful if eaten.

# Care of your bedding plants, perennials and Roses

## Autumn Bedding Plants

This includes **Pansy, Polyanthus, Primrose and all other autumn bedding plants.**

Pot up plugs and grow them on in cool, bright, frost-free conditions. Water sparingly. When fully rooted into their pots, gradually acclimatise bedding plants to outdoor conditions over 7 to 10 days prior to transplanting them into their final positions. Feed and water plants frequently. Deadhead faded flowers to encourage more blooms to be produced. When deadheading pansies be sure to pinch off the whole flower to the base of the stem to achieve more flowers. Lift and divide clumps of primroses and polyanthus every 3 years in May to maintain vigorous, healthy growth.

## Hardy garden plants and perennials from plugs and larger pots (1 litre, 2 litre pots)

This includes **Penstemons, Lavender, Osteospermum, Delphinium, Digitalis (Foxglove), Hardy Chrysanthemum, Dianthus (Carnation), Heuchera, Meconopsis, Delosperma, Alstroemeria, Lewisia, Leucanthemum, Hollyhock and Buddleja.**

Although some of our plug plant varieties are hardy once mature, they will need the same start as on page 2 (**steps 2 and 3**). Once the roots are showing through the bottom of the pots and frosts have passed, plant out into borders - they'll be happy in sun and semi-shade. Add some general purpose compost to the soil to help with drainage as they get established. They can also be grown in containers and after planting they will need very little care, gradually move them up a pot size as they grow. A light trimming in April or September will help keep their shape and encourage new shoots. They will all benefit from our plant food (p7) being added to the compost, so whilst you are planting up your plug plants, add this for extra flowers and better growth through the season.

## Bare-root perennials

Includes: **Aster, Astrantia, Eremurus (Foxtail Lily), Hemerocallis (Day Lily), Hosta, Sanguinaria, Trillium.**

On delivery, plant bare root perennials at the earliest opportunity. Should soil conditions prevent planting directly into borders (if soil is frozen or waterlogged) pot up bare roots, water sparingly and grow on in a cool position. When planting out choose a sunny position in well drained soil. Work some compost or general fertiliser into the top 20cm of the soil. Dig a hole wide enough to accommodate the bare root with its roots spread out and deep enough that the crown of the plant is about 5cm below soil level. Backfill the hole with soil and firm the plant in gently. Leave a slight depression around the plant - this will help to direct water towards the roots. Water well to settle the soil. In autumn, remove the old foliage and apply a mulch of well rotted manure to the base of the plant. Lift and divide hardy perennials in autumn every third year to maintain their vigour.

## Roses

Plant bare-root roses at the earliest opportunity following delivery. If planting is not possible then 'heel them in' by covering the roots with soil until conditions allow them to be planted in their permanent positions. Choose a position in fertile well drained soil in full sun. Roses are greedy plants so add a small handful of granular fertiliser and mix some well rotted manure or compost into the soil prior to planting. Dig a hole of sufficient width and depth to comfortably accommodate the bare-root plant. Position the plant in the hole so that the base of the stems sits just below soil level. Backfill the soil around the roots of the plant, firm in, and water well. Feed and water roses regularly. Deadhead faded flowers. In autumn apply a mulch of well rotted manure or compost to the base of the plant. In winter, begin pruning roses by removing dead and diseased wood, and any rubbing or damaged branches. Then reduce the stems to 25cm (10") above ground level. Side shoots should be reduced to two buds.

# Care of your Trees and Shrubs

## Trees and garden shrubs

Includes: **Lavender, Acer, Buxus, Bay, Mahonia.**

Gradually acclimatise to outdoor conditions before transplanting into their chosen final position in the garden. Grow in moist, fertile, well drained soil in sun or dappled shade, with shelter from strong winds. Alternatively grow in large containers using a soil-based compost such as John Innes No.3. Plant to the depth they were in their pot and make sure they are sturdy. Water regularly through the growing season until well established. Your trees and shrubs require little pruning other than to maintain their shape. Lightly trim stems in late summer if necessary. **Italian Cypress** do not need trimming. **Adam's Laburnum** is toxic if eaten, so keep away from children.

## Daphne

Grow daphne plants in moist, fertile, well drained soil that is rich in organic matter. Choose a position in sun or semi shade. When growing in containers use a soil based compost such as John Innes No. 3. Daphne resents root disturbance so try to avoid this when transplanting as this may delay plant establishment. Feed and water regularly throughout the growing season while young plants become established. Once established, daphne plants require only occasional attention. Pruning daphne is best kept to a minimum, removing only occasional damaged stems and lightly trimming those that spoil the shape of the plant in summer after flowering. **Caution:** irritant to skin and eyes, toxic if eaten.

## Wisteria and Magnolia

Grow wisteria and magnolia plants in a sunny or semi-shaded position in any moist, well drained soil. A sheltered south or west facing wall is ideal and will offer some protection from late frosts which can sometimes damage young flower buds. To improve poor soils, add plenty of well rotted manure or garden compost prior to planting. Magnolia plants establish quicker when their roots are shaded. For your wisteria provide the twining stems with an appropriate and sturdy support, such as trellis or strong wires attached to walls and pergolas. When growing wisteria or magnolia in patio containers, use a soil based compost such as John Innes No. 3. Feed and water regularly throughout the spring and summer. Prune wisteria plants in July and again in February. During the first two years, prune to create a framework of permanent stems. Tie in selected lateral shoots to sturdy supports and cut back any unwanted growth. Once the desired framework has been created, continue pruning wisteria twice a year to contain the plant's growth within its allotted space. Magnolias require little pruning other than to maintain their shape and remove damaged or crossing stems.

**Caution:** All parts, particularly wisteria seedpods, are harmful if eaten.

## Hydrangeas

Choose a sunny or semi shaded spot, sheltered from cold winds. Plant in borders in rich moist, well drained soil. Add plenty of manure to improve heavy clay or light sandy soils. Alternatively plant in patio containers in soil-based compost such as John Innes No. 3. Feed and water container grown plants regularly. As plants increase in size they will require repotting into increasingly larger pots. In autumn, apply a mulch of manure or garden compost to the base of border grown plants. Leave faded flower heads in place until new buds swell the following spring, these help protect the buds from frost damage. Prune stems in spring, removing any rubbing, damaged or diseased stems and reducing stems to maintain a permanent woody framework. **Caution:** irritant to skin and eyes, harmful if eaten.

## Hardy Gardenia

Plant directly into well drained, rich fertile soil, in a sheltered position in dappled shade. Plants prefer an acid soil. If you don't have acid soil, simply plant them in patio containers using a mix of ericaceous compost and soil based compost such as John Innes No. 3. Repot the plant at its original soil level and firm well into the new container and water in. Water regularly throughout the growing season. Where possible, use rainwater as the lime contained in tap water will reduce the acidity in the soil over time. Feed regularly with fertiliser for acid-loving plants. Protect from hard frosts during particularly cold periods. Container-grown plants may be moved to a cool frost-free position for the winter if necessary. Gardenias require little pruning other than lightly trimming the stems to maintain their shape in spring.

# Care of your Climbers, Hellebores, Water Lilies and Auriculas

## Climbers

Grow climbers such as **clematis, jasmine, honeysuckle** and **dregea**, in sunny borders in any moist, well drained soil. Plants particularly dislike dry soils so add plenty of well rotted manure or garden compost to improve moisture retention in summer. Plant with the top of the rootball positioned 7.5cm (3") below soil level, to encourage new shoots to form from the base of the plant. Provide the twining stems with an appropriate support, such as trellis or wires attached to fences and pergolas. Alternatively grow climbers up freestanding plant frames in patio containers. When planting in containers, use a soil based compost such as John Innes No.3. Feed and water frequently throughout the growing season. In late autumn, apply a mulch of well rotted manure or compost to the base of the plant. Annual pruning will encourage strong growth and promote flower development across the whole plant. When and how to prune depends on the variety - see individual plant listings at [www.vernonplants.com](http://www.vernonplants.com) for details.

## Water Lily

Plant in ponds and containers of undisturbed water during spring or early summer. Fill aquatic baskets with aquatic compost or heavy garden soil, and plant water lily rhizomes just below the soil surface. Push some aquatic fertiliser pellets into the soil to feed the plant. Top the container with a layer of gravel to prevent the soil washing away. Gently lower containers into the water and position them on temporary supports such as bricks so that they sit just 20cm (8") below the surface of the water. As the leaves grow to rest on the water surface, the container can be gradually lowered to its final depth (this will vary according to variety - see individual web listings). Remove yellowing leaves and faded flowers regularly. If growing water lilies in containers move them to a sheltered position against a house wall for the winter, or place in a cool greenhouse to prevent the water freezing through. When the leaves of mature plants emerge above the water surface, lift them from the water and divide overcrowded crowns. Repot young portions of the crown and discard the older portions.

## Hellebore

Pot up plants and grow them on in frost-free conditions until large enough to plant outside. When plants are well grown, acclimatise them to outdoor conditions over 7 to 10 days. Plant hellebores in neutral or alkaline soil, in dappled shade. Hellebores prefer a moist, humous rich, fertile soil that does not dry out in summer or sit waterlogged in winter. When growing hellebores on heavy clay or thin sandy soils, add plenty of well rotted leaf mould or other organic matter to the soil prior to planting. Mulch hellebores with well rotted manure or garden compost each spring. Hellebores resent disturbance after planting and may take some time to re-establish. However when clumps become overcrowded, lifting and dividing of hellebores should be undertaken immediately after flowering. **Caution:** Hellebore sap may irritate the skin and eyes. All parts are harmful if eaten. Irritant to skin and eyes, harmful if eaten.

## Auricula

Grow auriculas in fertile, moist, well drained soil in sun or semi shade. When growing *Primula auricula* on clay soil, improve the drainage by incorporating plenty of coarse grit and well rotted garden compost prior to planting. Alternatively, grow auriculas in a cool greenhouse or on a bright windowsill. Pot the plants into a 50:50 mix of John Innes No.2 compost and coarse grit, and position them in bright, filtered light. Potted auricula plants should be watered from beneath to prevent water from damaging the foliage. During the summer months keep the compost reliably moist and protect the plants from direct, midday sun. Deadhead faded auricula flowers to encourage more blooms to be produced. In winter, move container grown plants to a bright position in a cool greenhouse and reduce watering until the following spring.

# Care of your Grasses, Bulbs, Tubers, Rhizomes & Corms

## Miscanthus/Grasses

Grow grasses in fertile, moist, well drained soil in full sun. Maiden Grass resents soils that sit wet in winter. Prior to planting, improve drainage on particularly heavy soils by incorporating plenty of well rotted compost and grit. Feed and water all grasses regularly until fully established. Cut back dead foliage and stems to ground level in early spring before new growth appears. Lift and divide overcrowded clumps of Miscanthus grass every third year to maintain their vigour.

## Dahlia tubers

Plant tubers in small pots or trays in moist compost upon receipt. Grow on in a warm, frost-free position. When all risk of frost has passed, gradually acclimatise to outdoor conditions over a 7 to 10 day period. Transplant into containers or beds and borders, in any well drained soil in sun or semi shade. Feed and water plants frequently. Deadhead faded flowers to encourage more blooms to be produced. When stems blacken with the first autumn frosts, remove tubers from beds and containers. Wash and dry the tubers then store over winter in peat or sand, in a cool but frost-free position. Replant your tubers in February or March for another outstanding display!

## Iris rhizomes

A sunny position in well drained soil is ideal. Bearded iris rhizomes prefer an open position where the rhizomes can bake in the summer sun, without being shaded by other plants. These perennials require a very free draining soil, so amend heavy clay soils with plenty of grit and well rotted manure prior to planting. When planting, ensure that the rhizome sits just at the soil surface as they are prone to rot if planted too deeply. Overcrowded clumps of bearded iris plants can be divided in late summer after flowering. Avoid mulching the rhizomes to prevent them from rotting over winter. **Caution:** All parts of bearded iris are harmful if eaten, and the sap may irritate the skin and eyes.

## Bulbs and rhizomes

Includes: **Lily of the Valley, Nerine, Polianthes.**

Plant bulbs and rhizomes in sun or semi-shade. The bulbs thrive in most fertile, well drained soils, except for particularly wet soils. Plant them in natural looking drifts for a magnificent display. After flowering, allow the foliage to die back naturally as this will feed the bulbs and rhizomes for the following year. Water when necessary during summer to prevent the soil from drying out. **Caution:** Contact with bulbs may irritate the skin and eyes. Bulbs are harmful if eaten.

## Begonia tubers

Begonia tubers should be potted into small pots and placed in the warmth on a windowsill or in a heated propagator to shoot. Once grown on, these can be planted out into borders, baskets and containers once all risk of frost has passed. At the end of the summer reduce watering and allow the stems and foliage to yellow and turn brown then naturally fall away from the tuber. Once stems have fallen away lift and dry tubers and store in a cool frost-free place in readiness for planting again the following year.

## Gladioli corms

Spring is the best time for planting Gladiolus corms. Plant them at a depth of 10cm (4"). Choose a sunny, sheltered position in well drained soil. Add well rotted manure or compost to improve drainage on heavy clay soils. Try planting gladioli in groups of five or seven for greater effect. Stagger planting over a few weeks for a succession of flowers throughout summer. Taller varieties may require staking with garden canes to support their tall stems. After flowering, allow the foliage to die back naturally as this will help to feed the corms for next year's growth. Corms should be lifted, cleaned and dried off during autumn, removing any remaining foliage. During winter store corms in a cool, dry place away from risk of damp or frost. In milder areas with light soils, lifting may not be necessary. Replant in spring for another wonderful display!

# Care of your Bulbs

## Lily and Tree Lily bulbs

Choose a sheltered, sunny position in moist, free draining soil. Plant lily bulbs in spring or autumn with the pointed end facing upwards at a depth of approximately 3 times their height and 15cm (6") apart. Make sure that they are planted deep enough as this will protect the bulb during particularly hot periods. Alternatively, try planting lily bulbs in large patio containers in loam-based compost such as John Innes No.2. Feed and water regularly throughout the growing season. Deadhead faded blooms at the base of the flower where they join the stem to prevent the development of seed pods. After flowering leave the stems intact until they begin to yellow in autumn. This will help to feed the bulb for the following year. For the same reason it is vital to leave a third of the stem intact when cutting Lilies for indoor arrangements. A mulch of well rotted manure or garden compost should be applied in autumn.

## Allium

Alliums thrive in light, sandy, well drained soil in full sun. Avoid planting in cold wet soils as the bulbs are prone to rot in these conditions. Plant allium bulbs at a depth of 10cm (4") and a distance of 10cm (4") apart. A slow release fertiliser can be added to poor soils at the time of planting to improve fertility. When growing alliums, plant them where the leaves of other plants will cover the base of their stems. This will hide the old foliage which dies back before flowering begins. Alliums require little maintenance. Leave stems of faded allium flowers intact to enjoy their spectacular seedheads in autumn. Divide overcrowded clumps of alliums after flowering.

## Daffodil

Daffodil and narcissus bulbs are easy to establish in any moist, well drained soil. Plant the bulbs in full sun or semi-shade at a depth of approximately 10cm (4") and at a distance of 10cm (4") apart. Narcissus and Daffodils look particularly eye-catching when grown as drifts in borders or informal areas of grass. For a really natural effect, cast the bulbs across the area and plant them where they land. For an attractive indoor display, plant daffodils and narcissus in containers of bulb fibre and position them in a cool garage or other well ventilated, dark location at a maximum temperature of 10°C (50°F). Water sparingly when necessary to keep the compost moist. When the growing shoots reach a height of 10cm (4") move the containers to a cool bright position indoors (approximately 16°C or 60°F). After flowering, allow the foliage to die back naturally before removing it in June or July. This will help to feed the bulb for the following year. When growing daffodils and narcissus that are naturalised in grass, avoid mowing the area until their foliage has died back. **Caution:** Narcissus bulbs are harmful if eaten. The sap may irritate the skin and eyes.

## Tulip

Plant tulip bulbs in late summer or autumn. Tulips will grow well in any moist, well drained soil, except for particularly wet soils. Choose a sunny position that is sheltered from strong winds. When planting tulip bulbs avoid shallow planting as this may reduce the winter cold period that is essential for tulip bulbs to produce flowers in spring. Plant them at a depth of 15cm (6") and at a distance of 13cm (5") apart. After flowering, deadhead the faded tulip flowers and allow the foliage to die back completely before removing it in summer. **Caution:** Tulip bulbs are an irritant to skin and eyes, and are harmful if eaten.

## Recommended Plant Food



**Add our feed to your compost when planting ... ideal for ALL your flowering plants!**

This feed has the perfect blend of nutrients that flowering plants need so you'll see better foliage and many, many more flowers.

# Care of your Tomato and Blueberry Plants

## Blueberry/Pinkberry

Blueberries grow best in acid soil. If you don't have acid soil, grow them in patio containers in ericaceous compost. When growing in containers, pot on each spring into a slightly larger container - blueberries do not like roomy pots. Use a mix of ericaceous compost and a soil based compost such as John Innes No. 3. Repot the plant at its original soil level and firm well into the new container. Water well and position in sun or semi shade. Grow blueberry plants directly in borders in a sheltered, position in moist, well drained soil.

## Getting more from The Vernon Nursery

### Stay in touch with our FREE email newsletter.

We're keen to keep in you in touch with our latest news, information and most importantly, special offers as they happen! The quickest way to do this is by email and there are lots of advantages. We won't pass your details on to other firms or pester you with endless emails, as some companies do, but it allows us to email you when your plants are on their way to you and pass on our timely gardening tips and extra how-to info. Joining is quick and easy - just head over to [www.vernonplants.com](http://www.vernonplants.com) and add your address to the 'newsletter sign up' box. Our website also offers 'how-to' videos which are full of tips and growing advice!

## Our 100% Guarantee

You can rest assured that we care that our customers are happy and we always strive to ensure your complete satisfaction - we have been posting out our plants for over 37 years so we are fully experienced in mailing out quality plants. Complaints are very rare but if you are unhappy with anything you receive from us please email us at [vernonladies@vernonplants.com](mailto:vernonladies@vernonplants.com) or write to us within 28 days of receipt. We will then ensure we resolve any problems so that you are 100% satisfied.

## Tomatoes

Pot up plug plants and grow on in warm frost free conditions until large enough to plant out. In May, when all risk of frost has passed, gradually acclimatise plants outdoors in a sheltered position in full sun. Prepare for planting by digging in plenty of well rotted manure or garden compost and adding slow release fertiliser to the soil. Alternatively grow tomatoes in a greenhouse or on a sunny patio in grow bags or large containers using good quality compost such as John Innes No. 2. Tomato plants will require support as they grow and removal of side shoots (but not on basket varieties). Water plants regularly and start to feed once first flowers set fruit.

## Check your order status

### You can now check your order status

**online.** If you've placed an order with us, and you would like to check when your plants will be despatched, simply visit our website and click on the **My Orders** button, all you will need to input is your surname, postcode and email address.

**With The Vernon Nursery you'll discover the rarest, most beautiful plants for all around your garden.** We have all the plants you'll ever need for your borders, beds, containers and hanging baskets for vibrant year-round colour.

If a plant is not good enough by our high standards then we simply don't offer it for sale. We have found over the years that plants all have their own way and we've learnt through trial and error that some are a lot easier than others to grow. We only ever offer the best performing varieties to you. We're always more than happy to share our 'tips' and help with any growing advice needed along the way.

If you do have access to the internet then refer to our website, where there is lots more information and advice. You can easily register for our email newsletters too, where we give the best timely advice, month by month, for your garden plants.

**Happy gardening.**

**For more information** on how to care for any of the plants in the Vernon range, visit [www.vernonplants.com](http://www.vernonplants.com) Whilst there why not sign up to receive our email newsletters for all our additional hints and tips to make your garden thrive.

**Vernon**  
