



Helleborus care

Helleborus are long-lived, evergreen perennials native to central and south Europe, where they grow in poor soils in mountainous regions. These plants are very tough, need little care once established and are hardy from zones 4-9. Planted in the right spot, they are a beautiful addition to your garden. Helleborus are deer resistant, and all parts of the plant are poisonous, so take care to keep children and pets away.

Where to plant:

Helleborus prefer morning sun and afternoon shade, but they can tolerate some dappled sunlight in the afternoon. They can grow in a range of soil textures, including loamy, sandy, or clay soils. However, they generally prefer a loamy soil that provides good drainage with a neutral to slightly acidic pH of 6.0 to 7.5.

When to plant:

Plant your helleborus in the spring, being mindful of late spring frost. If you need to wait until the danger of frost has passed, your plants can be kept in a cool environment, such as a garage or basement, for several weeks.

How to fertilize:

Helleborus do not require any fertilizer in their first spring. Feed older plants from February onwards and apply a second dressing of fertilizer in midsummer, when the plants grow new roots and initiate flower buds for the next season. Be mindful of the type of fertilizer you use — one with too much nitrogen may result in lush foliage but few blooms.

How to prune:

Hellebores don't need dead-heading during the flowering season. The slightly pink or green tones the flowers take on as they fade actually extend the flowering season in winter. Remove the seed pods before they open, as offspring plants normally don't flower well and might suppress the original plants.

Leaves:

Lenten roses, a common name for helleborus species, should have all their leaves removed before the plant starts to flower in December and January (when budding stems are approximately 10 cm in height). The old, brown leaves of Christmas roses and snow roses should be removed in the spring and summer.

Frequently asked questions:

Do helleborus spread?

Yes, helleborus will self-sow. However, allowing them to do so may result in unexpected hybrids if you grow multiple types in close proximity. Thin out any new seedlings that are too close to mature plants and expect self-sown plants to flower after three years.

Do helleborus need to be divided? It's not usually necessary for the health of the plant, but if you wish to divide them, this is best done in fall. Helleborus can be fussy about being dug up and moved, so it's generally just best to leave them be.

Aldershot Greenhouses Ltd, 1135 Gallagher Road, Burlington, Ontario, Canada L7T 2M7 905-632-9272