



PEONY PLANTING GUIDE

SITE SELECTION

Select a site that has well-draining soil (never plant peonies in a wet spot) and receives at least 8 hours (10 hours preferably) of sunlight, the more sun, the stronger the stems, the more flowers per bush.

PEONY ROOT PREPARATION

Soak the root for 20 - 30 minutes in water prior to planting to rehydrate the root which loses some moisture during shipping.

SITE PREPARATION

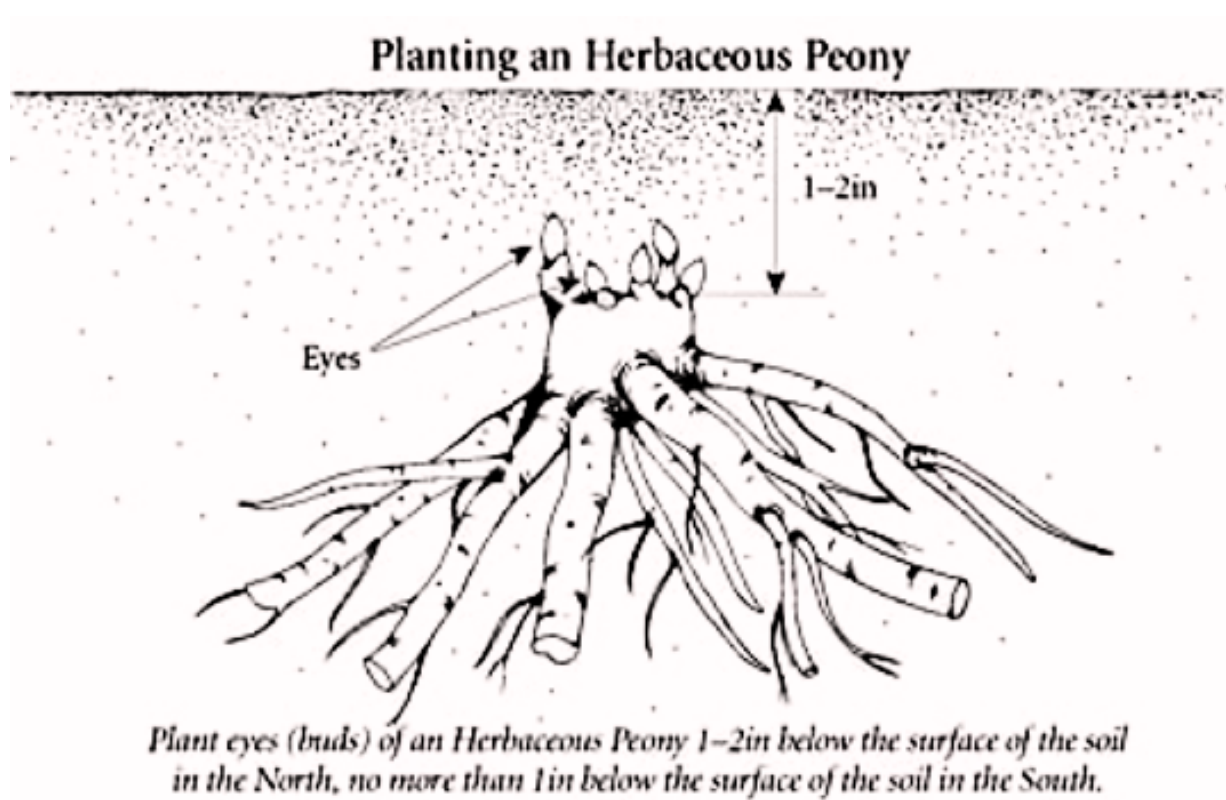
Dig a hole large enough to accommodate the roots without bending them. Amend the prepped hole with a well-draining, organically rich compost. Peat moss can be also added to improve the soil for growing peonies, and can help with root growth, flower life, and the number of flowers on the plant. In sandy soils, mix one part peat moss with three parts soil.

If you have clay soils the addition of 1 part peat moss to every 3 parts of clay soil will improve aeration of the soil and increase the height of the soil slightly making a mound and providing better drainage.

Just be aware that peat moss is not a fertilizer and is nutritionally void, so adding a well-draining, organically rich compost is necessary.

PEONY ROOT PLANTING

Plant the roots with the eyes (the pink or white buds at the top of the roots) pointing up and cover with NO MORE than one inch of soil (two inches for northern climates). See schematic.



If the eyes are set deeper than recommended, plants may not bloom. For this reason, do not mulch over the crowns.

POST PLANTING NOTES

Don't be surprised if there are few or no flowers the first spring after planting; plants generally take a few years to settle in and bloom heavily.

Peonies respond well to an annual side-dressing of one inch of compost or aged manure; no other fertilization is necessary.

An inch of water a week throughout the growing season is recommended.

It is best to stake all varieties of peonies and this can be done once they get about a foot tall with bamboo stakes and green garden tape or twine. If peonies get too tall, they can flop over on the ground and can break.

CALENDAR OF CARE

Early Spring - Water plants well if spring rains don't do it for you - peonies do not like wet feet, so do not keep the soil soggy. Side dress plants with compost or aged manure.

Mid Spring - Watch for signs of fungal infections and remove any diseased tissue. Keep weeds down, peonies do not like competition.

Late Spring - Dead head peonies. Once they have finished blooming, cut off spent blooms so that the plant puts energy back into the roots for next year's blooms instead of into making seeds. Cut the stem back into the plant to keep the peony bush looking neat.

Summer - Water with one inch of water each week - let the soil dry out in between waterings. Continue to keep weeds down.

Fall - Prune peonies back to soil level and discard foliage. If you plan to divide peonies, Fall is the ideal time.