

Your plant may have the growing tip removed, either by us, by damage in the post, or because it won't fit in the box. **THIS WILL NOT HARM YOUR PLANT !** And is NOT a case that the plant has a "dead" tip. In fact it will help to encourage the roots, and new growth will start, as new side shoots from where the leaves join the stem. (See below about first year growth)

Most of our hop plants that we sell are provided in 9cm pots and have survived winter, and should now be in active growth.

Remember that during early Spring the ground is not only too wet, but very cold, so we recommend that before planting out into final positions, they are best potted up into a larger pot (1.5 or 2 or even 3 litre pot) with a good quality compost that is well drained, eg has some sharp sand added at the rate of 80-20. This helps the plant develop a better root system before planting. Feed once a week with a general purpose liquid feed.

Hop plants do not like boggy, or wet roots, so the final position for planting should be well drained to allow excess water to flow away. If your land is heavy clay, or wet most of the time, then build a raised bed, as these drain water well, or dig the ground and add plenty of rotted manure and some sand or gravel.

Although Hop plants are winter hardy, and if you purchase these, in early growth, in early spring, we recommend you keep them out of cold winds, frost, etc, by putting them in a conservatory, greenhouse, sunny windowsill, or bring them indoors for the night if it turns cold. Placing against a south facing wall is ideal, if the wall has access to sun for most of the day.

When planting outside, make sure the ground is well drained, allowing excess water to drain well, and apply some bone meal, or, fish blood and bone, or Growmore this and every year. Hop Plants love well rotted horse manure, and this is free from your local stables. Mix generously with garden soil and apply every winter as a mulch when your plants die back for winter. Make sure the horse manure is well rotted.

Greenfly love hop plants, look out for them during late Spring, and treat accordingly.

Make sure you provide a string based frame for them to climb up, and allow no more than 4 stems to grow, cut out any more, as this helps with a better hop production.

Hop picking and drying normally starts around August – September.

### **First Year**

So what are we trying to do in the first year ? Add a cane to support the growth, and tie gently. We are not at all interested in leaf growth, or how high we can get it to go in year 1, so if growth gets out of control, feel free to cut it back a little, but leave at least 2-3 feet height. Hop plants do not develop hops the first year. Hops survive because they have a tuber like, at the top of the root system, similar to dahlia tubers (If you know what they look like). Our aim the first year is to make this tuber as big as possible, so that it will survive winter, and possibly start producing hops in year 2. This is our main aim. So we advise you pot up, from our 9cm pot, into say a 2 litre pot. Then in a few weeks, pot this up into a 5 litre pot. Then a few weeks later into a 10 litre pot, maybe even a bigger pot if you have the time and winter is not too far away. This is hard work, but each jump in pot size develops a good and strong root system. Add 20% sand in your compost mix, to aid drainage, as hops hate to have wet feet. Do not overwater, water then wait for the compost to dry out before watering again. Check the roots have filled the pot before potting up to a larger pot. Do not put into a larger pot just for the sake of it. Feed weekly.