



Canna Growing Guide

Cannas are native to the northern and southern hemisphere. Cannas do well in most areas of the United States, but flourish with plenty of heat and water.

Cannas are very dependable; easy to plant and easy to grow. Cannas offer showy, tropical color from early summer until frost. Cannas are regaining much of the popularity they once enjoyed as an old garden favorite.

PLANTING:

Cannas may be planted in the spring after danger from hard frost. In zone 7 we recommend planting from late March to late April. Adjust this guideline to your zone. Before spring planting, soil can be amended with compost, manure and a high nitrogen fertilizer. Best results are achieved when planted in a loose, fertile and well drained soil that has warmed to 60 degrees. Cannas will tolerate a wide range of growing conditions. Cannas love full sun and require a minimum of four hours of direct sunlight.

Plant rhizomes 12 to 18 inches apart. Lay the long part of the rhizome horizontal to the earth's surface with eye up, if visible. This is not critical, as cannas will grow no matter which direction they are planted. Cover with 2 inches of soil.

In colder regions, (6-8 weeks before spring), bulbs can be planted in pots and placed in greenhouse conditions. When danger of frost is past, remove from pot and plant outside.

Cultivate often to keep soil loose and free of weeds.

WATERING & FERTILIZATION:

Cannas should be watered thoroughly once a week by slowly soaking the area around roots. Cannas are heavy feeders. For optimum performance apply a high nitrogen, foliar fertilizer twice a month. Organic matter turned into the soil, such as composted manure will benefit the cannas as well. Although cannas will continue to bloom if not dead-headed, cutting old spent flowers and seed pods will make them prettier and neater in the garden.

Insects rarely bother cannas. Leaf-feeding insects and leaf-rolling caterpillars can be stopped by regular applications of systemic insecticide products such as Orthene or Ortho Systemic Insect Killer.

OVERWINTERING:

Cannas will multiply producing three to five bulbs for each one planted. Dig clumps of bulbs in the late fall or after the first frost for re-planting the following spring. The most common mistake is allowing the canna rhizomes to dry out too much while in storage. Two methods of storage are:

1. Remove old stalks, leave bulbs in clump with soil intact. Pile clumps and cover with plastic and store in basement. Never store in mesh bags that will allow bulbs to dry out.
2. Bulbs can be washed, divided, dried and layered with peat moss in cardboard boxes with lids or in plastic bags, with a few air holes, to prevent drying out. Store in basement or other cool place such as a garage, under the house, in a well house or cool room. Bulbs must not be allowed to freeze during storage. The ideal storage temperature is between 50 and 60 degrees.

IN SOUTHERN STATES (zone 7-10) where the ground doesn't freeze below four to six inches, cannas can be left in the ground all winter. Cut foliage down to the ground and cover flowerbed with six to twelve inches of grass clippings, leaves, compost, cotton burs, etc. Cannas should be thinned in the spring every one to two years by digging out thick areas of bulbs to allow spacing between the plants.

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