

Hops Garden

Licking County Master Gardener Volunteers Learning Center for Gardening



Hops are the flowers of the female hop plant (*Humulus lupulus*). While they have several uses, they are best known for adding flavor to beer during the brewing process. There are many cultivars of hops, each varying slightly in flavor. With the growing interest in brewing beer in one's home along with the explosion of the local craft beer movement, many people have started growing their own hops.

WHAT GROWS HERE

Hops grow from rhizomes (an underground stem that puts out both shoots and roots). Rhizomes can be purchased in early Spring online from reputable sellers who guarantee disease free rhizomes. Hop plants are perennial so they will continue to grow year after year.

HOW WE GROW IT

Hops need full sun, 6-8 hours of sunlight each day. They prefer loose, nutrient rich, aerated soil that drains well. Hops vines (called bines) require a sturdy vertical trellis. Bines can grow 25 feet high and can weigh up to 20 pounds.

How to Plant Hop Rhizomes

Plant the rhizomes in the early spring. Fertilize the soil and turn it over several times so that it is loose. Keep the rhizome horizontal as you plant it root side down, and cover it with 6-12 inches of soil. Mound the soil so that rain drains away.

Provide regular, light watering as the new growth becomes visible. Once the hop bines start growing, select three or four to grow from each rhizome and cut back all the rest. Train the bines to grow up the trellis or twine clockwise.

How to Harvest Hops

In Ohio harvest usually takes place around late August or early September. Check hops for signs that they are ready to harvest. They should lighten in color and feel papery as they start to dry out. You should be able to detect a "beer aroma" from the lupulin (yellow powder) that is inside each hop.

Cut the twine that the hops have been growing on and then pick off the hops. If you are not using them right away, the hops must be dried and are best stored in vacuum sealed bags and then frozen for future use. After the first frost cut the bines about 12 inches from the ground.

Resources

<https://southcenters.osu.edu/horticulture/other-specialties/hops>



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