



# RHUBARB

## Site planning

Select a sunny spot with good soil drainage. Because rhubarb can live for many years, aim to pick a spot where it can grow undisturbed. Make sure no nearby tree or shrub will eventually grow too tall and shade it out. In addition, rhubarb doesn't like competition from weeds, so adding a layer of mulch will help to suppress them. Rhubarb also can be grown in containers.

## Planting

Add rich well aged compost to the hole where rhubarb thrives in nutrient rich ground. Dig a hole twice the size of the pot and loosen up as much soil as you can around the hole. As you fill in around the root ball be sure to pat the soil down to remove any air pockets. Plant your rhubarb 4 to 6 feet apart-if placed too close together, the rhubarb will be smaller and less productive. Ensure the soil level at the top of the pot is level with the ground - don't bury the rhubarb deeper than it was in the pot! Water well. Mulching the ground around it helps maintain moisture in the soil and cuts down on competition from weeds. DON'T put the mulch right up against the plant - keep it out a few inches.

## Harvesting

Don't harvest any rhubarb in your plant's first growing season to allow it to become established. You can take a small harvest in the second growing season. During the third season, you can harvest freely, but never harvest more than a third to half of the plant at one time.

The main harvest season is the spring, though smaller harvests might continue throughout the summer. Stalks that are red and around 12 to 18 inches long are ready for harvesting. When stalks are sliced with a knife, the part left behind withers away. In contrast, twisting and pulling off the stalk allows it to separate from the bottom of the plant near the roots. This tells the plant to regrow a new stalk, giving you a more fruitful harvest and a healthier rhubarb plant.