

A Horticultural Jargon Buster



The following list of terms is not definitive and provided as a guide, we work in a technical industry where the jargon is used in our everyday activities.

We hope you find this guide useful and welcome additions to continue to grow the library for you and the benefit of others.

Acclimatisation - Adjusting plants to different conditions than those in which they are growing

Acid Soil - A soil with a pH lower than 7.0

Accelerator - A product used to speed the decomposition of organic matter

Aerate - Incorporate air by cultivation /removing thatch to aerate a lawn

Aerobic - Requires oxygen to live

Air Pot - A growing technique in a wrap round pot that results in a fibrous root system

Alkaline Soil - A Soil that has a pH level of 7.0 or more

Anaerobic - Organisms living or occurring when oxygen is absent

Annual - A plant that will complete its life cycle in one growing season

Anti-Transparent - Applied to foliage of evergreens reduces water loss for newly planted stock

Aquatic - BUNCH – Multiple stems usually weighted
DEEP WATER – Roots on the bed / leaves & flowers on the surface
FLOATING – Living on the surface of the water
MARGINAL – Planted to the surrounds, roots in the water crown out of the water

Bare-Rooted - Plants that have been dug out of the ground with no soil around the roots

Base Dressing - An application of fertiliser, organic matter or soil before planting

Bedding - A short lived planting providing floral impact seasonally

Beneficial Insect - Insects that will improve soil, attack harmful insects / pollinate plants

Bi-Annual - A plant that completes its life cycle in 2 years

Biodegradable - Able to breakdown by natural means

Biological Pest Con. - Using living organisms, to destroy pests

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Blanching - Excluding light to make leaves and stems tenderer

Blight - A fungal or bacterial disease, causing dead patches on stems or leaves

Blossom End Rot - A rotten spot at the blossom end of tomato fruit

Bolting - Crops that flower / grow prematurely

Breaking Bud - The point in time as the bud bursts through the bud scales

Bulb Guide -

	Flowering period (months)		Humus rich location
	Height in cm.		Calcareous location
	Bulb size (circumference in cm.)		Moist location
	Naturalising bulbs		Bulbs suitable for pots
	Bulbs per m2		Organic flower bulbs
	Mowing period (months)		Bulbs/mixtures attracting butterflies
	Sunny location		Bulbs/mixtures attracting bees
	Semi shade		Fragrant flowers
	Shady location		

Calcicole - A plant preferring an alkaline soil (pH +7.0), usually a limey soil

Calcifuge - A plant preferring an acidic (pH -7.0), usually a peaty or organic soil

Canker - A breakdown of cells from the phloem outwards

Catch Cropping - When you sow a quick maturing crop into a vacant gap

Chitting - Encouraging germination

Chlorophyll - The matter (green) essential for photosynthesis

Chlorosis - A symptom of deficiency, usually iron, stress or disease (yellowing)

Click & Collect - The collection of orders placed on line following a lead period

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Clay	- Soil particles less than 0.002mm, as a soil greater than 40%
Cloche	- A structure for protecting plants from the cold and pests
Club Root	- A disease of brassicas caused by the slime mould fungus
Co-co Wrap	- A material wrapped around the root ball to prolong the planting season of a RB
Cold Frame	- An unheated outdoor frame in which young plants are placed to acclimatise them to outdoor conditions
Companion Planting	- Different plants planted together to deter pests, e.g. onions with carrots deters carrot fly
Complete Fertiliser	- A plant food which contains all three of the primary elements (NPK) ... nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium + minor nutrients
Compost	- Applied to a growing media blend or as a result of composting material
Conifer	- A cone bearing plant with needle / scale like leaf (Deciduous or Evergreen)
Contact Weed killer	- A product that kills plants on contact
Container Grown	- A plant grown in a contained system, i.e. a pot
Contract	- A signed document setting out the works, standards or supply of goods
Cotyledon	- An embryonic leaf in seed-bearing plants, one or more of which are the first leaves to appear from a germinating seed (mono =1 dicot = 2)
Deciduous	- To loose leaf as in the autumn and to re-grow foliage in the spring
Dormant	- Alive waiting for the right conditions for growth
Drip Irrigation	- Controlled application of water through a restricted pipe
Earthing Up	- Process of drawing up soil from spaces between rows to create ridges
Ericaceous	- A term applied to lime haters / intolerant to alkaline soils/growing media
Evaporation	- The loss of water from a surface
Evapo-Transpiration	- The combined loss of water from the surface and the plant
Evergreen	- A plant that retains its foliage in all seasons
Exotic Plants	Plants introduced from another climate

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Feathered Tree	- Trees with branches from ground level (measured as a height not girth)
Fertigation	- The application of fertilisers through irrigation
Fertile	- A soil rich in nutrients and biological life
Fertilizer- Standard	- A blend of nitrogen, phosphorus and potash
Fertiliser – Crf	- The controlled release of nutrient over a determined length of time
Field Capacity	- Water held in suspension after the soil has drained
Fleece	- Light woven material used to protect plants from frost or used as a barrier against insect pests
Foliar Feeding	- Applying liquid solutions of fertilizer to the leaves of plants
Forcing	- The processes of making a plant grow before its natural season
Frost	- The freezing and condensation of moisture in the air. Frost dates are important to know for your area
Frost Hardy	- Plants that survive winter frosts without damage
Frost Tender	- Plants will be damaged or killed by even the lightest of winter frosts
FSC	- A term applied by companies using wood from managed resources
Full Shade	- Full Shade/ deep shade and is created by mature trees, buildings or structures
Full Sun	- Six hours or more per day in the direct sun during the growing season
Furrow	- A depression in the planting area either created by spade or mechanical means
Germination	- When seeds begin to sprout leaves
Girth	- Measurement of a tree, circumference of stem 1 meter from soil level
Grafting	- To join 2 or more plants to form a single plant
Green Manure	- A crop grown specifically for digging back into the soil to add nutrients or to provide green matter and nitrogen
Ground Cover	- Term used to describe low-growing plants
Growing Habit	- A direction or shape a plant takes as it grows
Growing Point	- Area of new growth occurs

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Growing Season	- The time from the last frost in spring to the first frost in autumn
Half Hardy	- Plants unable to survive the winter without protection
Harden Off	- The gradual acclimatisation of seedlings
Hardy	- Plants able to survive the winter without protection
Heaving	- When changes in the climate causes the soil to buckle upward, (heat)
Herbs	- Aromatic plants used for seasoning, medicinal purposes, or garnishes
Hoeing	- A method of loosening the soil at a shallow level to kill weed seedlings
Honey Dew	- The sweet and sticky syrup secreted by aphids and other sap-sucking insects
Hybrid	- A plant produced from 2 plants of a different variety
Infertile	- Soil that has no nutrients
Insect-Mesh	- Fine mesh sheet used to cover crops for pest control
Inter-Cropping	- Growing small crops in the spaces alongside larger slow growing plants
Irrigation Method	- The systemised application of water to plants
Leaching	- The loss of nutrients washed through the soil / compost
Leaf Mould	- Compost like substance formed by partially decomposed leaves
Leaky Pipe	- A porous irrigation pipe, typically used underground up to establishment
Legume	- A member of the pea family
Micro-Climate	- An area with a set of conditions different from those surrounding the area
Micro-Nutrients	- A group of nutrients that plants need for proper growth
Micro-Organisms	- Too small to be seen clearly with the naked eye
Mildew	- Types of fungi e.g. downy and powdery found on leaves
Mulch	- A layer of material placed over the ground, feeding, conserving moisture, stopping weeds germinating, keeping the soil warm or protecting from erosion
Multi-stem	- Multiple breaks close to the base providing a vase like habit (usually 3,5,7)
Neutral Soil	- This is neither acid nor alkaline; pH 6.5 - 7.5

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Nursery Mark	- (collar) the soil mark left on the stem at the planting depth on the nursery
Nutrients	- The minerals (fertilisers) used to feed plants
Open Ground (OG)	- See bare root
Organic	- Materials that has been alive
Organic Gardening	- The method of gardening utilizing only materials derived from living things
Organic Matter	- For example rotted leaves, composted pine bark, mushroom compost
Packaging	- Box pallet - a cardboard box 100x120x100cm on a pallet for the transport of plants - Danish trolley - a wheeled transport system
Peat	- Formed by the partial decomposition of vegetable matter in a wet environment
Perennial	- Plants that live for more than two years
Ph Scale	- The pH scale ranges from 1 to 14, with 7 being the point at which soil has a neutral reaction
Pinching	- Using your thumb and forefinger to remove the tip growth of plants
Planting Out	- Transplanting plants from one place to another
Poisonous Plants	- A plant that when touched / ingested may cause a harmful reaction / irritation
Pollinator	- Insects that move from plant to plant transferring pollen
Potting Up	- Moving plants from one size of container to the next
Powdery Mildew	- Fungus creating a powder-like white to greyish-white cover on the leaf surface
Pricking Out	- Moving tiny seedlings from pots or trays into new pots
Propagator	- A system that speeds up germination
Propagation	- Techniques used to multiply plants
Raised Beds	- Planting areas that are mounded or boxed above ground level
Red Spider Mite	- Tiny, sap-sucking spider-like mites often found in hot, dry conditions
Root	- Typically underground systems that support a plant
Root Ball (RB)	- A lifted item combining root system and surrounding soil/compost
Root Barrier	- A product used to physically control/ restrict / deflect root systems

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Root Bound	- Roots become entangled and begin to grow in circles
Root Crops	- Any vegetable where the roots are edible
Root Rot	- Roots are affected by fungus diseases, relates to poor drainage
Scale	- Sucking insects found in milder climates usually on stems
Slow Release Fert	- Generally a natural fertiliser that release nutrient over a period time
Soaker Hose	- Hoses that have hundreds of mini holes to let the water out slowly
Soil Amendment	- Anything added to the soil to improve the present situation (conditioners)
Soil Test	- A chemical test that measures the nutrients in your soil and its acidity
Standard	- A clear stem- a quarter - full standards
Systemic	- (Translocated) A product that is absorbed to provide control and can move around the plant
Tender	- A plant that is killed or damaged by low temperatures
Thinning	- Removing seedlings that are planted too closely together
Tilth	- A fine, crumbly layer of surface soil
Tired Soil	- A piece of land that has been exhausted of its nutrient value
Top Dressing	- An application of fertiliser added to the growing media to 'top up'
Topsoil	- Soil that is at the very top of the soil profile
Transpiration	- The loss of water through the pores of the leaf
Transplant	- To move from one location to another
Tree Pit Slump	- The base of the planting pit is aerated allowing settlement after planting This can cause arresting off growth / losses when planting trees
Tree Stakes	- Pealed & Pointed – variable diameter / shape Machine Rounded – consistent diameter along the length Dipped – treated with preservative, not recommended for use with plants
Waterlogging	- Where the air spaces are filled (saturated) with water
Wilt	- A collapsed plant, caused by fungal disease or lack of water

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WRB

- Wire root ball - burlap/material nappy + wire 'cage' (see root ball)