

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

Alpine Plants that grow in an alpine climate which occurs at high elevation and above the tree line. These include perennial grasses, sedges, forbs, cushion plants, mosses, and lichens

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

Bamboo A woody plant with a hollow stem that's in the grass family

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Bare-Rooted

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

(1+1)	Starting in the seed beds and then lined out for 1 year (plant is 2 years old)
(1u1)	Starting in the seed beds and lined out, the plant is undercut resulting in a heavier root system and straight plant (plant is 2 years old)
(1+2)	Starting in the seed beds and then lined out for 2 year making a heavier plant (plant is 3 years old)
(2+1)	A 2 year old plant lined out for a further year making for a heavier plant (plant is 3 years old)
(1+3)	A 1 year old seedling grown in seed beds and then lined out for 3 years producing a heavier plant (plant is 4 years old)
(2+2)	A 2 year old plant lined out for a 2 further years, giving a stockier, bushier plant (plant is 4 years old)
(C+2)	A plant grown in the ground for 2 years from a container/plug/root trainer

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

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

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 0 m ²	Bulbs per m ²	 organic	Organic flower bulbs
 5	Mowing period (months)	 biodivers	Bulbs/mixtures attracting butterflies
 sun	Sunny location	 biodivers	Bulbs/mixtures attracting bees
 semi shade	Semi shade	 fragrant	Fragrant flowers
 shady	Shady location		

Burlap usually for the smaller items, a square of 'open' cloth tied around the base of the plant to contain the soil

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

Clay - Soil particles less than 0.002mm, as a soil greater than 40%

Climbers Are plants which climb trees and other hosts using a range of adaptations such as twine stems, adapted leaf petioles, suction pads, aerial roots or barbed thorns (Wall Plants)

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

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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

Container sizes

Standard Range - House & Grower Range

Description	Colour	Diameter (cm)	Height (cm)	Volume (ltr)
PC 11cm H (vol 12)		11.0	9.8	0.65
PC vol 13		12.0	10.5	0.8
C 13cm		13.0	11.0	1.0
C 14cm L		14.0	10.6	1.1
C 14cm		14.0	12.4	1.3
C 15cm L		15.0	10.8	1.25
C 15cm		15.0	13.0	1.5
C 17cm XL		17.0	10.4	1.65
C 17cm L		17.0	12.7	2.0
C 17cm H		17.0	15.5	2.5
C 19cm XL		19.0	13.5	2.5
C 19cm L		19.0	15.5	3.0
C 19cm M		19.0	17.0	3.25
C 19cm H		19.0	18.5	3.5
3.5 Litre Bucket		19.0	18.5	3.5
C 21cm		21.0	16.3	4.0
C 23cm		22.5	17.0	5.0

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Standard Range

Colour	Volume (ltr)	Diameter (mm)	Height (mm)	Pots Per Danish Shelf
■	1.0	130	107	40
■	1.5	150	121	33
■	2.0	163	131	30
■	3.0	180	149	22
■	4.0	210	165	17
■	5.0	230	174	14
■	7.5	258	204	10
■	10.0	283	224	9
■	15.0	320	257	7
■	20.0	375	257	5

Deep (Climber Pots)

Colour	Volume (ltr)	Diameter (mm)	Height (mm)	Pots Per Danish Shelf
■	2.0	143	150	36
■	3.0	168	188	30
■	4.0	186	201	21

Containerised typically rootballed plants in containers that, if handled with care, can be planted throughout the year

Contract - A signed document setting out the works, standards or supply of goods

Corm a rounded underground storage organ consisting of a swollen stem base covered with scale leaves

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)

Country of origin 'The country where the plant has been growing for the latter half of the most recent growing season'

Cultivar Or 'cultivated variety'. A cultivar is selected and cultivated; some cultivars originate as sports or mutations on plants. Other cultivars could be hybrids of two plants, propagation by seed producing something different from the parent plant

Deciduous - To lose leaf as in the autumn and to re-grow foliage in the spring

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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	#
Feathered Tree	- Trees with branches from ground level (measured as a height not girth)
Fern	a flowerless spore-producing plant with leaf-like fronds
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
Fruit	a generic term we apply to a group of seed-bearing plants that are edible formed from the ovary after flowering
FSC	- A term applied by companies using wood from managed resources

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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
Genus	is a generic term used to classify more than one species of plant that are closely related in characteristics
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
Grasses	are monocotyledons, usually herbaceous with narrow leaves growing from the base. They include the 'true grasses', as well as the sedges and rushes
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
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)
Hedge	a row of shrubs or small trees that are planted close to each other in order to form a boundary or something that provides protection, screening or defence
Herbaceous	Are plants that have non-woody stems. Their above ground growth largely or totally dies back in winter, but they have underground parts (roots, bulbs, etc.) that survive and re-grow
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

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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
Lightly rooted	generally applied to plants that have good top growth but a light root system that, if handled with care, can be planted
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)
Nets	typically smaller items using an elasticated net to contain the root system
Neutral Soil	- This is neither acid nor alkaline; pH 6.5 - 7.5
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

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Organic Matter	- For example rotted leaves, composted pine bark, mushroom compost
Origin	'The place in which indigenous plants are grown or the place from which non-indigenous plants were originally introduced'
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
Provenance	'The place in which any plant, whether indigenous or non-indigenous, is growing'
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
Root Bound	- Roots become entangled and begin to grow in circles
Root Crops	- Any vegetable where the roots are edible

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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

Species is a group of plants, smaller than a genus, that are similar and belong together, or have some shared quality

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

Topiary the horticultural practice of training perennial plants by clipping the foliage and twigs of trees to maintain clearly defined shapes, whether geometric or fanciful shapes

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

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Tree sizes

The table below provides a guide to the terminology, estimated rootball size and weight. The weight guide is subject to the nursery soil type and water content. The height is a guide; different genera & species will have variable growth rates

Tree Guide

Girth	Abbreviation	Type	Rootball Sizes	Weights	Height
4-6cm	ELS	Extra Light Standard	40x40cm	25kg	2m
6-8cm	LS	Light Standard	40x40cm	35kg	2.0-2.5m
8-10cm	S	Standard	40x40cm	50kg	2.5-3.0m
10-12cm	SS	Select Standard	40x40cm	60kg	3.0-3.5m
12-14cm	HS	Heavy Standard	60x60cm	85kg	3.0-3.5m
14-16cm	EHS	Extra Heavy Standard	60x60cm	85kg	3.5-4.0m
16-18cm	EHS	Extra Heavy Standard	60x60cm	115kg	4.0-4.5m
18-20cm	EHS	Extra Heavy Standard	60x60cm	135kg	4.0-5.0m
20-25cm	SM	Semi Mature	70x60cm	200kg	4.5-5.5m
25-30cm	SM	Semi Mature	80x60cm	300kg	5.0-6.0m
30-35cm	SM	Semi Mature	90x60cm	400kg	5.5-6.5m

Tree Stakes - Pealed & Pointed – variable diameter / shape
Machine Rounded – consistent diameter along the length
Dipped – treated with preservative, not recommended for use with plants

Trimmed a term applied to plants that have been trimmed in the container and are in the process for re-flushing

Tuber a thickened underground part of a stem or rhizome serving as a food reserve bearing buds from which new plants arise

Variety A cultivar is selected and cultivated; some cultivars originate as sports or mutations on plants. Other cultivars could be hybrids of two plants, propagation by seed producing something different from the parent plant

Waterlogging - Where the air spaces are filled (saturated) with water

Wilt - A collapsed plant, caused by fungal disease or lack of water

Wire nets used for larger plants to contain the heavier rootball comprising of material and a wire basket tied around the base of the plant

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

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