



The Garden Post



Richmond Hill
Garden & Horticultural
Society

Beautifying Richmond Hill since 1914

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GROWING PEONIES



Native to China, peonies are well known and well loved perennials. Easy to grow, with glorious single or double blooms, ranging from white through yellow, pink, coral, reds and lavenders, they can remain in the garden for many decades.

Herbaceous peonies, hardy to zone 2, die down in winter; the leaves should be cut, not pulled, off

around Hallowe'en and put into the garbage to avoid disease problems. Tree peonies are woody-branched with beautiful leaves. Hardy to zone 4, no pruning is needed except to remove dead or frost damaged parts. Intersectional or Itoh peonies combine the features of both tree and herbaceous peonies. Many unusual colours have been produced in the Itoh group.

Plant peonies in the middle of a sunny border where their handsome leaves will form a backdrop for later flowering plants. Soil should be enriched with organic material, compost or manure and two tablespoons of bulb fertilizer, mixing well into an 8" to 9" deep hole which is then backfilled, the peony roots should be covered by only 2" of soil. Failure to produce flowers is usually caused by planting too deep! Peonies should be fertilized with a low nitrogen fertilizer when the reddish shoots emerge in spring. ***This is the time*** to place supports or peony rings, to protect the brittle new shoots and to avoid the heartache when a spring storm flattens the blooms. Repeat fertilizing after blooming.

To produce larger flowers, disbudding may be done when the *side buds* are the size of peas, this process adds strength to young plants and reduces the weight on the stem. Deadheads should be removed to encourage plant growth.

Peonies are generally disease free but can be affected by botrytis, a fungal disease which blackens the leaves. Cut off and dispose of affected leaves. Sulphur can be used in severe cases.

With good soil preparation and a little patience these hardy plants will reward you with fabulous flowers for years to come.

Article: J.E. Wingate

UPCOMING EVENTS

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, May 3, 2011
Lecture Title: Vertical Vegetables
Speaker: Ken Brown

Peterborough Garden Show
April 8 – 10
For info: www.peterboroughgardens.ca

Creating a Network for York Region Community Gardeners
Date: April 9, 2011
Time: 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm
Place: Toronto Waldorf School

Planting of Town Baskets & Barrels
Date: April 19, 20 and 21
April 26, 27 and 28
May 3, 4 and 5

Marion Jarvie Open Garden
Date: April 23 – 24
Time: 10:00 am – 4:00 pm Rain or Shine
Place: 37 Thornheights Road, Thornhill

OHA District 15 AGM
Date: April 30, 2011
Time: 8:00 am – 4:00 pm
Place: Toronto Montessori School

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...and much more!

