

# Peony Care Basics

A guide to caring for peonies in Colorado gardens



## How to Plant

Choose a location that has a minimum of 5–6 hours of direct sun each day. Make sure this area is well drained with no sogginess or standing water.

Amend the soil in the area with a generous amount of compost, digging it in several inches deep.

When positioning the peony in the planting hole, make sure that the soil level remains the same as it was in the pot. When planting a tuberous peony root, be sure that the pink buds or “eyes” on the root face upwards and are **no deeper than 2” beneath the top of the soil**. Space peonies at least 3 feet apart.

## How to Care for Your Peony

**Water** deeply when first planted. Repeat this deep watering every few days, checking first to see if the soil around the peony is dry. Once established, the peony will need 1–2 good soaks per week.

**Support:** You will need to support the plant as the blooms are often quite full and heavy. Put the peony cage into the ground around the shrub as soon as you see the green shoots emerge in the spring.

**Fertilize:** The best fertilizer is an application of compost (Nature’s Yield or EKO compost) each fall, lightly scratched into the soil around the plant. You can also fertilize with a good organic granular fertilizer (Organic Garden-Tone Herb and Vegetable, Happy Frog All Purpose, or Age Old Granular in Full Bloom) in spring.

**Ants** do not harm peony flowers. The buds secrete nectar, which attracts the ants. The ants protect the blossoms from other floral feeding insects.

**Post Flowering:** Cut off the spent flower heads and you will have an attractive shrub with glossy green leaves all summer. **Do not** cut the peony bush down in the fall until all stalks are completely brown and laying on the ground.

## At a Glance

**Water:** Deeply when first planted and every few days; 1–2 good soaks per week once established; avoid sogginess.

**Light:** 5–6 hours direct sun per day.

**Cages:** Needed for support of heavy blooms; Put into the ground when green shoots emerge in spring.

**Fertilizer:** Use compost each fall, lightly scratched into the soil surface around the plant.

## Fragrant Peonies

Alexander Fleming–Double Pink	Kansas–Double Red	Sarah Bernhardt–Double Rose Pink
Duchesse de Nemours–Double White	Karl Rosenfeld–Double Cherry Red	Shirley Temple–Blush to White
Edulis Superba–Double Pink	Mons. Jules Elie–Double Pink	
Festiva Maxima–Double White	Paul M Wild–Double Ruby Red	