

# Rhubarb Growing & Care Guide for Boise and Treasure Valley Gardens

*A local gardening guide from Five Mile Farm & Greenhouses  
Boise, Idaho*

Rhubarb grows very well in Boise and throughout the Treasure Valley when planted in rich, well-drained soil and full sun. Once established, rhubarb is a hardy perennial that can produce flavorful stalks for many years with proper care.

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## **PLANTING**

Plant rhubarb in late winter or early spring. Amend soil with compost at planting time to ensure soil is rich and well drained. Place the plant so the crown bud sits about **2 inches below the soil surface**. Space plants 3-4 feet apart. Irrigate regularly when the active top growth indicates that shoots are growing.

## **FERTILIZING**

Rhubarb plants are heavy feeders and will benefit greatly if two to four inches of compost is added to the soil prior to its growth cycle in the spring. A yearly application of a natural fertilizer such as Down to Earth Vegetable Garden in the early spring is also helpful in ensuring optimum growth.

## **HARVESTING**

Plants should grow a full two seasons before harvesting for best results. Harvest stalks that are 12-18 inches long. Harvest stalks by grasping them near the base and pulling sideways and outward, cutting with a knife will leave a stub that could decay. Never remove all leaves from a single plant. Stop harvesting when slender leaf stalks appear. By the third year, the harvest period is typically 8-10 weeks. Cut out any blossom stalks that appear.

The leaves of the plant are poisonous, so make sure to only eat the stalks.

## **DIVIDING**

To keep your rhubarb plants thriving for many years, they can be divided every 5 years or so. A good sign that your rhubarb needs divided is if your stalks are thin or small. Dividing can be done either in the spring before growth starts or in the fall.

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