

## Rhubarb

Rhubarb is an amazing plant with its large, crinkled leaves, and thick red stalks. It also makes quite a statement as an ornamental too. Rhubarb is an old fashioned plant and its history goes back to 2700 BC in China, where it was used medicinally. Rhubarb was first recorded in the Americas in Massachusetts back in 1790; it became widely grown from then on. It is an easy plant to grow, but prefers a colder winter. Rhubarb stalks have a delicious tart flavor and make wonderful pies, sauces and compotes. However, remember the leaves are poisonous and should never be eaten.



**Size:** 3' tall and 6' wide

**Exposure:** Full sun, partial shade in hot areas.

**How to Plant:** Plant tops of divisions "crowns" at soil level.

**Fertilize:** Fertilize after harvest.

**Propagation:** Divide a crown of a mature plant in early spring when "eyes" can be easily seen.

**Water needs:** Rhubarb needs plenty of water, but do not overwater.

**Soil:** Good rich soil that has been amended with well rotted manure.

**Snapshot:** Bare-root plants should be planted in winter or early spring. It does best where winters are cold, at least 2 months of cold is best for thick stems. Zones 1-11, but you can try growing it in zones and zones 10-11 treat as a cool season annual. The plant will go dormant in cool weather regions. Allow Rhubarb to grow at least 2 years and harvest the third. Harvest by pulling the stalks of young plants for 4 -5 weeks, mature plants can take up to 8 weeks of harvest. Never cut stalks with a knife they will rot. Remove any flowers that may appear.

**Novella Springer**  
**Calaveras Master Gardener**  
**San Andreas**  
**January 27, 2013**