

FIVE STEPS TO GROWING YOUR OWN HOPS

Taking your home brew to the next level...

- 1. Hops can be grown from seeds or rhizomes, which is a root-like stem that produces roots below and sends up shoots. Growing hops from seeds can take a long time, so if you're a first time hop grower and without much space, try a dwarf hop rhizome such as Prima Donna.**
- 2. The best time to plant hops is during winter. Choose the sunniest spot in your garden with room for strings or a climbing pole and plant your rhizome as soon as possible in high-quality compost. If you're not planting your rhizome during winter, keep it in the fridge for at least a week before planting.**
- 3. As your hop grows, train the earliest shoots to climb. Once two or three bines per string have been established, remove any surplus ones in late spring. With plenty of sun and water, your hop should reach its maximum height by summer, sprouting feathery buds, full of aroma.**
- 4. Your hop plant will need three years to fully establish itself, but you can still harvest its cones in the first year. Harvesting should take place in early autumn when the cones begin to feel dry and papery. Protect yourself by wearing strong gardening gloves and a tough fabric long-sleeved top, as hop leaves can cut your skin. If you're using the cones fresh, you'll need to do so within 12 hours of picking, otherwise dry the cones for later use.**
- 5. Hops are perennial, so your hop will regrow every year. After harvest, prune your hop plant and allow it to die back and lay dormant during winter, before it sprouts new shoots again in spring.**