



Helleborus

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'Winter Rose'

One of the most beautiful and easy-going perennials for shaded gardens is the hellebore, commonly known as the Winter Rose or Christmas Rose which begin to bloom in June/July, with blooms lasting for months. Pretty, open, cup-shaped flowers, which look a bit like single roses (hence the name). Hellebores can be found at Heynes Garden Centre from May/June into the winter months.

Winter Roses are adored for their ornamental diversity, ease of care, attractive leathery leaves, often with spiny borders and their long blooming winter colour.

Flowers can be single and open, double, frilled, pendant or outward facing, there really is an infinite range from which to pick. The palette of flower colours offers a choice for everyone. A fabulous colour range, from subtle and fascinating colours such as pale yellow, shades of pink, maroon, purple, dark plum, green, greenish-pink, greenish-white and cream. Flowers are often delightfully spotted, veined or picot-edged in contrasting colour and extraordinarily long lasting remaining attractive until spring.

Most of the common hellebores are clump-forming, around 40-60cm tall, low-growing more or less evergreens with toothed, palmate foliage, which make them amazing in massed plantings or valuable ground covers, especially in dry shady areas.

GROWING CONDITIONS

Hellebores are generally suited to temperate cool climates and prefer dappled shade. Hellebores like sun in winter, and shade in summer, so they thrive in those often hard to fill, partly shaded areas of the garden, and beneath the shade of deciduous trees and shrubs. You will be able to tell if Hellebores are receiving too much shade, as they won't have any flowers and if they receive too much sun, their leaves will scorch. They grow pretty much anywhere as long as there isn't too much humidity, and have absolutely no problem with frost.

Typically Hellebores prefer an alkaline, humus-rich well-drained soil, they will not establish well in poor or boggy soil and sandy soil are best avoided. At planting time it's a good idea to incorporate plenty of compost into the soil. When planting your Hellebore, dig the hole, twice the size of the existing pot, and position the plant where the roots meet the soil.

Remove the really tatty old leaves in February or March, but otherwise no pruning is required. It is best to remove any damaged or burnt leaves in early autumn so that new leaves flourish. Fresh new foliage will soon appear and the flowers will be displayed better, rather than being obscured by shabby leaves. If there are still some shabby leaves at flowering, these can also be removed. Removing old foliage helps to control any fungal infections of the leaves.

Hellebores can be grown in large pots too, but don't forget they will need a bit of extra care to keep them looking great as they are relying on you to ensure their water and nutrient needs.



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WATERING/FERTILISE

Watering over the warm summer months may be required and some low-nitrogen fertiliser applied in late summer when flower buds are forming will help to give a lovely display. They will also benefit from another feed after flowering is over, with an all-purpose organic fertiliser.

PESTS/INSECTS AND PROBLEMS

Hellebores are tough plants and are rarely affected by pests. Aphids are the main pest of these plants and can be easily treated with a suitable spray like white oil or pest oil. Great news, snails and slugs are not attracted to the rough leaves.

Hellebores will appreciate not being over crowded by nearby plants, as airflow around the plants will help to reduce the risk of fungal diseases on the foliage.

Note: All parts of the plant are toxic.