



CARE SHEET FOR HELLEBORUS x. HYBRIDUS

Commonly known as 'Lenten Rose', this mid winter, into spring blooming perennial is a real performer.

A complex hybrid, with multiple parentage (parents native SE Europe into Black Sea region), these plants are quite tough and adaptable. That said, for peak performance certain guidelines should be followed. Too deep of shade is detrimental, as the plants will diminish in size with few to no flowers.

All day sun isn't good either, especially if you have a free draining soil, and/or strong wind. While they can take all day sun (in heavy, rich soil that gets some summer irrigation), the plants will most likely suffer from leaf burn/scald, and the flowers will be susceptible to winter damage and subsequent secondary infection with fungal pathogens.

At the garden, we have them sited where they get a mix of sun and shade, and in most places they've grown admirably.

If you haven't grown this plant before, purchase it in flower! Too many skanky plants are being sold, so caveat emptor. If you have a good color selection, and there are other colored plants nearby, be aware that the seedlings will most likely not be as nice. As a general rule, we deadhead before the ripe seed has a chance to spill out. Often, the self sown seedlings will emerge from within the crown of the parent plant, and can overtake/choke out the one you really want, or at least mix it up into a color muddle.

If a plant is healthy, leave an outer 'ring' or 'ruff' of foliage (cutting away inner foliage), when the plant comes into flower. While it can look tidy to cut all of the foliage off, it is better for the plant to not. Even in the winter/early spring months, the plant will be pulling energy in, and being anal every year will result in a smaller plant (the plant won't die from this treatment, but why do it?). It is best to remove all the old foliage just before or as the new leaves emerge, at which time you can take the flower stems off too. Some plants (many doubles) are more deciduous in nature and can have their foliage removed entirely in the autumn. They will let you know by how tawdry they look come September, regardless of growing conditions.

Be on the lookout for black fungal spotting, both on leaves and flowers. An occasional small spot is one thing, but fast growing spots are another. Entire flowering stems can collapse, if not dealt with. Best to cut away any affected portions, making certain to not spread this to unaffected plants (disinfect your snips). There is a blackening disease that will outright kill them, in which case dig them up and put them in the trash, not the compost!

At the garden we have these plants mixed in with deciduous shrubs and other perennials. In Ed's perennial border they help extend the season of interest, since the border really comes into full flower later in the summer.