

Description

Growing hibiscus is an easy way to add a tropical flair to your garden. When you know how to care for hibiscus plants, you will be rewarded with many years of lovely flowers. Let's look at some tips on how to care for hibiscus.

Growing Hibiscus From Seeds

Nick the Seed Coat

Nick the hard seed coat at the wider, rounded end of the seed with a clean craft knife.

Soak the Seeds

Soak the seeds in a small bowl of hot water for up to 24 hours. Begin the sowing process 12 weeks before your last expected spring frost.

Prep the Planting Tray

Fill a planting tray with moist seed-starting mix, usually a soil-less product that combines perlite, vermiculite and peat moss.

Sow the Seeds

Sow the seeds 1/4 inch deep, firming the moist seed-starting mix over the seed. Place one seed per plug if your seed tray has inserts that hold the mix in separate 1- to 2-inch compartments.

Otherwise sow seeds a few inches apart so seedlings will be easy to remove later.

Keep Them Warm

Set the tray on a waterproof greenhouse heat mat set to 68 to 72 degrees Fahrenheit or in a room with the same temperature range.

Conserve Moisture

Cover the tray with its included clear plastic dome or with plastic wrap to keep moisture in.

Check the Seed Tray

Check the seed tray regularly over the one to three weeks it takes the seeds to germinate.

Ensure the soil is moist but not soggy. Too-wet soil can cause the seeds to rot before they germinate.

Remove the Plastic

Remove the plastic when plants emerge and move the tray to a site where it receives bright, indirect sunlight.

Apply Fertilizer

Apply a balanced, water-soluble fertilizer mixed to half its recommended strength with every other watering after the seedlings produce their first true leaves – the first pair of leaves after

the initial seed leaves that emerge at germination. Water enough to keep the potting soil evenly moist, never letting it dry out or become waterlogged.

Transplant the Seedlings

Transplant the seedlings to separate 1-gallon containers filled with standard potting soil when they have at least three sets of leaves. Allow them to grow in a sheltered area for several weeks before transitioning them to their permanent outdoor location when all danger of frost has passed.

Growing Hibiscus in Containers

Many people who are growing a hibiscus plant choose to do so in a container. This allows them to move the hibiscus plant to ideal locations, depending on the time of year. Provide the plants with at least six hours of sunlight, especially if you want to see those lovely blooms. Although warm, humid conditions are ideal for tropical hibiscus, you may want to provide a little afternoon shade when it's overly hot. Again, containers make this easy to do.

Hibiscus plants prefer a cozy fit when growing in a container. This means that they should be slightly root bound in the pot and when you do decide to repot, give the hibiscus only a little bit more room. Always make sure that your growing hibiscus plant has excellent drainage.

Temperatures for Growing Hibiscus

When you care for a hibiscus, you should remember that hibiscus flower best in temperatures between 60-90 F. (16-32 C.) cannot tolerate temps below 32 F. (0 C.). In the summer, your hibiscus plant can go outside, but once the weather starts to get near freezing, it's time for you to bring your hibiscus indoors.

Watering Hibiscus

When hibiscus are in their blooming stage, they require large amounts of water. Your hibiscus will need daily watering in warm weather. But once the weather cools, your hibiscus needs far less water, and too much water can kill it. In the winter, water your hibiscus only when the soil is dry to the touch.

Fertilizing Hibiscus

A growing hibiscus plant needs lots of nutrients in order to bloom well. In the summer, use a high potassium fertilizer. You can either use a diluted liquid fertilizer one a week, a slow release fertilizer once a month or you can add a high potassium compost to the soil. In the winter, you don't need to fertilize at all.

These are the basics for how to care for hibiscus plants in your garden. As you can see, they are a easy maintenance, high impact flower that will make a garden in any part of the world look like a tropical