

I'm Your New Best Acquisition

My real name is "Hosta" although some garden centers still call me "plantain lily" which is so archaic. Although I originate from Japan, Korea and China, my family came to Europe in the late 1700s, and by mid 1800s we were in the USA. Even though it's fashionable nowadays to emigrate, I was born just under a year ago and very much part of the local Canadian scene. I reach maturity after about 5 or 6 years, but I already have an attitude (with names like mine, I can afford to!). My family and I are about 50 species and thousands more cultivars, so we have different colors and patterns - I usually flower from May to October. We can, on maturity, vary in size from just a few inches in diameter to a spread of ten feet. Now, don't be alarmed when my color changes, just like a chameleon - it's seasonal temperature changes.

Now, I'm going to give you a few tips on how to take good care of me, so that I can get happier and healthier, year after year. If you follow these hints, I won't have to bite your head off!!

Soil Preparation

It's a good idea to remember that I like organic matter such as garden compost, leaf mould, well rotted manure, composted pine bark and peat moss, in my planting home. I love to spread my roots horizontally so please dig deep with generous width. Keep me firmly tucked into the soil.

How To Water Me

I'm not your girlfriend or your dog. If you want to shower me with affection, rather do it with water. Bathe me abundantly and soak the entire surrounding soil while I grow (at least 1 inch of water per week). I am always thirsty (my leaves droop), so always keep my soil moist. I love my bath early in the morning cause evening watering invites slugs.

How To Feed Me

I am a heavy feeder so a liquid fertilizer in a very dilute solution is good - a balanced ratio of nitrogen, phosphates and potash, say 10-10-10 with small amounts of iron, magnesium or calcium is what I prefer. It would be a good idea to keep me on this.

How To Spoil Me

Keep me lightly mulched with either pine straw, cocoa, pine bark nuggets, shredded hardwood or shredded leaves to reduce water loss from the soil. You can, however, talk to me as often as you please. (of course I can't be held responsible for what other humans might think of your mental health, if you are seen to be having the occasional chit chat with me). I am very house proud and I will not tolerate slugs and snails. So, when you see me becoming holey follow a maintenance program of ammonia solution (1:10 ratio of ammonia to water) and follow it bi-weekly all season.

Finally, please keep my personal papers in a safe place. Refer to them if you forget how to keep me in tiptop shape. *Here's to a long and lasting relationship!*