



Horticultural Jargon Buster A-Z

The following list of terms is not definitive and is provided as a guide; we work in a technical industry where jargon is frequently used but can sometimes cause confusion.

We hope you find this guide useful and welcome additions to continue to grow the library for you and the benefit of others.

A	
Acclimatisation	Adjusting plants to different conditions than those in which they are growing
Acid soil	A soil with a pH lower than 7.0
Accelerator	A product used to speed the decomposition of organic matter
Aerate	Incorporate air by cultivation / spike or remove plugs to aerate a lawn
Aerobic	Requires oxygen to live
Air pot	A growing technique in a wrap round pot that results in a fibrous root system
Alpine	Plants that grow in an alpine climate which occurs at high elevation and above the tree line. These include perennial grasses, sedges, forbs, cushion plants, mosses, and lichens
Alkaline soil	A soil that has a pH level of 7.0 or more
Anaerobic	Organisms living or occurring when oxygen is absent
Annual	A plant that will complete its life cycle in one growing season
Anti-transparent	Applied to foliage of evergreens reduces water loss for newly planted stock



Aquatic	<p>Bunch – Multiple stems usually weighted</p> <p>Deep water – Roots on the bed / leaves & flowers on the surface</p> <p>Floating – Living on the surface of the water</p> <p>Marginal – Planted to the surrounds, roots in the water crown out of the water</p>
B	
Bamboo	A woody plant with a hollow stem that's in the grass family
Bare-rooted	<p>Plants that have been dug out of the ground with little or no soil around the roots</p> <p>(1+1) – Starting in the seed beds and then lined out for 1 year (plant is 2 years old)</p> <p>(1u1) – Starting in the seed beds and lined out, the plant is undercut resulting in a heavier root system and straight plant (plant is 2 years old)</p> <p>(1+2) – Starting in the seed beds and then lined out for 2 year making a heavier plant (plant is 3 years old)</p> <p>(2+1) – A 2 year old plant lined out for a further year making for a heavier plant (plant is 3 years old)</p> <p>(1+3) – A 1 year old seedling grown in seed beds and then lined out for 3 years producing a heavier plant (plant is 4 year old)</p> <p>(2+2) – A 2 year old plant lined out for a further year, giving a stockier, bushier plant (plant is 4 years old)</p> <p>(C+3) – A plant grown in the ground for 2 years from a container / plug / root trainer</p>
Base dressing	An application of fertiliser, organic matter or soil before planting
Bedding	A short-lived planting providing seasonal floral impact
Beneficial insect	Insects that will improve soil, attack harmful insects / pollinate plants
Bi-annual	A plant that completes its life cycle in 2 years



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Biodegradable	Able to breakdown by natural means																																							
Biological pest control	Using living organisms, to destroy pests																																							
Blanching	Excluding light to make leaves and stems tenderer																																							
Blight	A fungal or bacterial disease, causing dead patches on stems or leaves																																							
Blossom end rot	A rotten spot at the blossom end of tomato fruit																																							
Bolting	Crops that flower / grow prematurely																																							
Breaking bud	The point in time as the bud bursts through the bud scales																																							
Bulb guide	<table> <tbody> <tr> <td></td><td>Flowering period (months)</td> <td></td><td>Humus rich location</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Height in cm.</td> <td></td><td>Calcareous location</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Bulb size (circumference in cm.)</td> <td></td><td>Moist location</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Naturalising bulbs</td> <td></td><td>Bulbs suitable for pots</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Bulbs per m²</td> <td></td><td>Organic flower bulbs</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Mowing period (months)</td> <td></td><td>Bulbs/mixtures attracting butterflies</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Sunny location</td> <td></td><td>Bulbs/mixtures attracting bees</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Semi shade</td> <td></td><td>Fragrant flowers</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Shady location</td> <td></td><td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					Flowering period (months)		Humus rich location		Height in cm.		Calcareous location		Bulb size (circumference in cm.)		Moist location		Naturalising bulbs		Bulbs suitable for pots		Bulbs per m ²		Organic flower bulbs		Mowing period (months)		Bulbs/mixtures attracting butterflies		Sunny location		Bulbs/mixtures attracting bees		Semi shade		Fragrant flowers		Shady location		
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Burlap	Usually for the smaller items, a square of 'open' cloth tied around the base of the plant to contain the soil																																							

C	
Calcicole	A plant preferring an alkaline soil (pH +7.0), usually a limey soil
Calcifuge	A plant preferring an acidic (pH -7.0), usually a peaty or organic soil
Canker	A breakdown of cells from the phloem outwards
Catch cropping	When you sow a quick maturing crop into a vacant gap
Chitting	Encouraging germination in tubers by placing in a tray in a light and cool place
Chlorophyll	The matter (green) essential for photosynthesis
Chlorosis	A symptom of deficiency, usually iron, stress or disease (yellowing)
Click & Collect	The collection of orders placed online following a given period
Clay	Soil particles less than 0.002mm, as a soil greater than 40%
Climbers	Are plants which climb trees and other hosts using a range of adaptions such as twine stems, adapted leaf petioles, suction pads, aerial roots or barbed thorns (Wall Plants)
Cloche	A small translucent cover structure for protecting plants from the cold and pests
Club root	A disease of brassicas caused by the slime mould fungus
Co-co wrap	A material wrapped around the root ball to prolong the planting season
Cold frame	An unheated outdoor frame in which young plants are placed to acclimatise them to outdoor conditions
Companion planting	Different plants planted together to deter pests, e.g. onions with carrots deters carrot fly
Complete Fertiliser	A plant food which contains all three of the primary elements (NPK) ... nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium + minor nutrients



Compost	Applied to a growing media blend or as a result of composting material																																																																																														
Conifer	A cone bearing plant with needle / scale like leaf (Deciduous or Evergreen)																																																																																														
Contact weed killer	A product that kills plants on contact with foliage																																																																																														
Container grown	A plant grown in a contained system, i.e. a pot																																																																																														
Container sizes	Standard Range - House & Grower Range <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Description</th><th>Colour</th><th>Diameter (cm)</th><th>Height (cm)</th><th>Volume (litr)</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>PC 11cm H (vol 12)</td><td>■ ■</td><td>11.0</td><td>9.8</td><td>0.65</td></tr> <tr> <td>PC vol 13</td><td>■ ■</td><td>12.0</td><td>10.5</td><td>0.8</td></tr> <tr> <td>C 13cm</td><td>■ ■</td><td>13.0</td><td>11.0</td><td>1.0</td></tr> <tr> <td>C 14cm L</td><td>■ ■</td><td>14.0</td><td>10.6</td><td>1.1</td></tr> <tr> <td>C 14cm</td><td>■ ■</td><td>14.0</td><td>12.4</td><td>1.3</td></tr> <tr> <td>C 15cm L</td><td>■ ■</td><td>15.0</td><td>10.8</td><td>1.25</td></tr> <tr> <td>C 15cm</td><td>■ ■ ■ □</td><td>15.0</td><td>13.0</td><td>1.5</td></tr> <tr> <td>C 17cm XL</td><td>■</td><td>17.0</td><td>10.4</td><td>1.65</td></tr> <tr> <td>C 17cm L</td><td>■ ■ ■ □</td><td>17.0</td><td>12.7</td><td>2.0</td></tr> <tr> <td>C 17cm H</td><td>■ ■ ■ □</td><td>17.0</td><td>15.5</td><td>2.5</td></tr> <tr> <td>C 19cm XL</td><td>■ ■</td><td>19.0</td><td>13.5</td><td>2.5</td></tr> <tr> <td>C 19cm L</td><td>■ ■ ■ □</td><td>19.0</td><td>15.5</td><td>3.0</td></tr> <tr> <td>C 19cm M</td><td>■ ■ ■ □</td><td>19.0</td><td>17.0</td><td>3.25</td></tr> <tr> <td>C 19cm H</td><td>■ ■</td><td>19.0</td><td>18.5</td><td>3.5</td></tr> <tr> <td>3.5 Litre Bucket</td><td>■</td><td>19.0</td><td>18.5</td><td>3.5</td></tr> <tr> <td>C 21cm</td><td>■ ■</td><td>21.0</td><td>16.3</td><td>4.0</td></tr> <tr> <td>C 23cm</td><td>■ ■</td><td>22.5</td><td>17.0</td><td>5.0</td></tr> </tbody> </table>					Description	Colour	Diameter (cm)	Height (cm)	Volume (litr)	PC 11cm H (vol 12)	■ ■	11.0	9.8	0.65	PC vol 13	■ ■	12.0	10.5	0.8	C 13cm	■ ■	13.0	11.0	1.0	C 14cm L	■ ■	14.0	10.6	1.1	C 14cm	■ ■	14.0	12.4	1.3	C 15cm L	■ ■	15.0	10.8	1.25	C 15cm	■ ■ ■ □	15.0	13.0	1.5	C 17cm XL	■	17.0	10.4	1.65	C 17cm L	■ ■ ■ □	17.0	12.7	2.0	C 17cm H	■ ■ ■ □	17.0	15.5	2.5	C 19cm XL	■ ■	19.0	13.5	2.5	C 19cm L	■ ■ ■ □	19.0	15.5	3.0	C 19cm M	■ ■ ■ □	19.0	17.0	3.25	C 19cm H	■ ■	19.0	18.5	3.5	3.5 Litre Bucket	■	19.0	18.5	3.5	C 21cm	■ ■	21.0	16.3	4.0	C 23cm	■ ■	22.5	17.0	5.0
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Standard Range				
Colour	Volume (ltr)	Diameter (mm)	Height (mm)	Pots Per Danish Shelf
■	1.0	130	107	40
■	1.5	150	121	33
■	2.0	163	131	30
■	3.0	180	149	22
■	4.0	210	165	17
■	5.0	230	174	14
■	7.5	258	204	10
■	10.0	283	224	9
■	15.0	320	257	7
■	20.0	375	257	5
Deep (Climber Pots)				
Colour	Volume (ltr)	Diameter (mm)	Height (mm)	Pots Per Danish Shelf
■	2.0	143	150	36
■	3.0	168	188	30
■	4.0	186	201	21

Containerised	Typically root balled plants in containers that, if handled with care, can be planted throughout the year
Contract	A signed document setting out the works, standards or supply of goods, for example, contract growing where a large quantity of plants are grown to order for a customer
Corm	a rounded underground storage organ consisting of a swollen stem base covered with scale leaves
Cotyledon	An embryonic leaf in seed-bearing plants, one or more of which are the first leaves to appear from a germinating seed (mono =1 dicot = 2)



Country of origin	The country where the plant has been growing for the latter half of the most recent growing season
Cultivar	Or 'cultivated variety'. A cultivar is selected and cultivated; some cultivars originate as sports or mutations on plants. Other cultivars could be hybrids of two plants, propagation by seed producing something different from the parent plant
D	
Deciduous	To lose leaf as in the autumn and to re-grow foliage in the spring
Dormant	Alive, but waiting for the right seasonal conditions for growth
Drip irrigation	Controlled application of water through a restricted pipe
E	
Earthing up	Process of drawing up soil from spaces between rows to create ridges
Ericaceous	A term applied to lime haters / intolerant to alkaline soils / growing media
Evaporation	The loss of water from a surface
Evapo-transpiration	The combined loss of water from the surface and the plant
Evergreen	A plant that retains its foliage in all seasons
Exotic plants	Typically, subtropical or tropical species
F	
Feathered tree	Trees with branches from ground level (measured as a height not girth)
Fern	A flowerless spore-producing plant with leaf-like fronds
Fertigation	The application of fertilisers through irrigation
Fertile	A soil rich in nutrients and biological life



Fertilizer – Standard	A blend of nitrogen, phosphorus and potash
Fertiliser – Crf	The controlled release of nutrient over a determined length of time
Field capacity	Water held in suspension after the soil has drained
Fleece	Light woven material used to protect plants from frost or used as a barrier against insect pests
Foliar feeding	Applying liquid solutions of fertilizer to the leaves of plants
Forcing	The processes of making a plant grow before its natural season
Frost	The freezing and condensation of moisture in the air. Frost dates are important to know for your area
Frost hardy	Plants that survive winter frosts without damage
Frost tender	Plants will be damaged or killed by even the lightest of winter frosts
Fruit	A generic term we apply to a group of seed-bearing plants that are edible formed from the ovary after flowering
FSC	A term applied by companies using wood from managed resources
Full shade	Full Shade / deep shade and is created by mature trees, buildings or structures
Full sun	Six hours or more per day in the direct sun during the growing season
Furrow	A depression in the planting area either created by spade or mechanical means
G	
Genus	Is a generic term used to classify more than one species of plant that are closely related in characteristics



Germination	When seeds begin to sprout leaves
Girth	Measurement of a tree, circumference of stem 1 meter from soil level
Grafting	To join 2 or more plants to form a single plant
Grasses	Monocotyledons, usually herbaceous with narrow leaves growing from the base. They include the 'true grasses', as well as the sedges and rushes
Green manure	A crop grown specifically for digging back into the soil to add nutrients or to provide green matter and nitrogen
Ground cover	Term used to describe low-growing plants
Growing habit	A direction or shape a plant takes as it grows
Growing point	Area of new growth occurs
Growing season	The time from the last frost in spring to the first frost in autumn
H	
Half hardy	Plants unable to survive the winter without protection
Harden off	The gradual acclimatisation of seedlings
Hardy	Plants able to survive the winter without protection
Heaving	When changes in the climate causes the soil to buckle upward, (heat)
Hedge	A row of shrubs or small trees that are planted close to each other in order to form a boundary or something that provides protection, screening or defence
Herbaceous	Plants that have non-woody stems. Their above ground growth largely or totally dies back in winter, but they have underground parts (roots, bulbs, etc.) that survive and re-grow



Herbs	Aromatic plants used for seasoning, medicinal purposes, or garnishes
Hoeing	A method of loosening the soil at a shallow level to kill weed seedlings
Honey dew	The sweet and sticky syrup secreted by aphids and other sap-sucking insects
Hybrid	A plant produced from 2 plants of a different variety
I	
Infertile	Soil that has no nutrients
Insect-mesh	Fine mesh sheet used to cover crops for pest control
Inter-cropping	Growing small crops in the spaces alongside larger slow growing plants
Irrigation method	The systemised application of water to plants
L	
Leaching	The loss of nutrients washed through the soil / compost
Leaf mould	Compost-like substance formed by partially decomposed leaves
Leaky pipe	A porous irrigation pipe, typically used underground up to establishment
Legume	A member of the pea family
Lightly rooted	Generally applied to plants that have good top growth but a light root system that, if handled with care, can be planted
M	
Micro-climate	An area with a set of conditions different from those surrounding the area
Micro-nutrients	A group of nutrients that plants need for proper growth



Micro-organisms	Too small to be seen clearly with the naked eye
Mildew	Types of fungi e.g. downy and powdery found on leaves
Mulch	A layer of material placed over the ground, feeding, conserving moisture, stopping weeds germinating, keeping the soil warm or protecting from erosion
Multi-stem	Multiple breaks close to the base providing a vase like habit (usually 3,5,7)
N	
Nets	Typically, smaller items using an elasticated net to contain the root system
Neutral soil	This is neither acid nor alkaline; pH 6.5 - 7.5
Nursery mark or line	(Collar) the soil mark left on the stem at the planting depth on the nursery
Nutrients	The minerals (fertilisers) used to feed plants
O	
Open ground (OG)	See bare root
Organic	Materials that have been alive
Organic gardening	The method of gardening utilising only materials derived from living things
Organic matter	For example, rotted leaves, composted pine bark, mushroom compost
Origin	'The place in which indigenous plants are grown or the place from which non-indigenous plants were originally introduced'



P	
Packaging	Box pallet – a cardboard box 100x120x100cm on a pallet for the transport of plants Danish trolley – a wheeled transport system
Peat	Formed by the partial decomposition of vegetable matter in a wet environment
Perennial	Plants that live for more than two years
pH scale	The pH scale ranges from 1 to 14, with 7 being the point at which soil has a neutral reaction
Pinching	Using your thumb and forefinger to remove the tip growth of plants
Planting out	Transplanting plants from one place to another
Poisonous plants	A plant that when touched / ingested may cause a harmful reaction / irritation
Pollinator	Insects, birds or small mammals that move from plant to plant transferring pollen
Potting up	Moving plants from one size of container to the next
Powdery mildew	Fungus creating a powder-like white to greyish-white cover on the leaf surface
Pricking out	Moving tiny seedlings from pots or trays into new pots
Propagator	A system that speeds up germination
Propagation	Techniques used to multiply plants
Provenance	The timeline of where any plant, whether indigenous or non-indigenous, has been growing

R	
Raised reds	Planting areas that are mounded or boxed above ground level
Red spider mite	Tiny, sap-sucking spider-like mites often found in hot, dry conditions
Root	Typically, underground systems that anchor, feed and support a plant
Root ball (RB)	A lifted item with the root system and surrounding soil / compost within a wire & hessian ball
Root barrier	A product used to physically control / restrict / deflect root systems
Root bound	Roots become entangled and begin to grow in circles
Root crops	Any vegetable where the roots are edible
Root rot	Roots are affected by fungus diseases, relates to poor drainage
S	
Scale	Sucking insects found in milder climates usually on stems
Slow-release fertiliser	Generally, a natural fertiliser that releases nutrient over a period of time
Soaker hose	Hoses that have hundreds of mini holes to let the water out slowly
Soil amendment	Anything added to the soil to improve the present situation (conditioners)
Soil test	A chemical test that measures the nutrients in your soil and its acidity
Species	A group of plants, smaller than a genus, that are similar and belong together, or have some shared quality
Standard	A tree with a single clear stem

Systemic	(Translocated) A product that is absorbed to provide control and can move around the plant																																																																														
T																																																																															
Tender	A plant that is killed or damaged by low temperatures																																																																														
Thinning	Removing seedlings that are planted too closely together																																																																														
Tilth	A fine, crumbly layer of surface soil																																																																														
Tired soil	A piece of land that has been exhausted of its nutrient value																																																																														
Top dressing	An application of fertiliser added to the growing media to 'top up'																																																																														
Topsoil	Soil that is at the very top of the soil profile																																																																														
Topiary	The horticultural practice of training perennial plants by clipping the foliage and twigs of trees to maintain clearly defined shapes, whether geometric or fanciful shapes																																																																														
Transpiration	The loss of water through the pores of the leaf																																																																														
Transplant	To move from one location to another																																																																														
Tree pit slump	When the base of the planting pit is aerated allowing settlement after planting. This can cause arresting of growth / losses when planting trees																																																																														
Tree sizes	The table below provides a guide to the terminology, estimated root ball size and weight. The weight guide is subject to the nursery soil type and water content. The height is a guide; different genera & species will have variable growth rates																																																																														
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16-18cm	EHS	Extra Heavy Standard	60x60cm	115kg	4.0-4.5m																																																																										
18-20cm	EHS	Extra Heavy Standard	60x60cm	135kg	4.0-5.0m																																																																										
20-25cm	SM	Semi Mature	70x60cm	200kg	4.5-5.5m																																																																										
25-30cm	SM	Semi Mature	80x60cm	300kg	5.0-6.0m																																																																										
30-35cm	SM	Semi Mature	90x60cm	400kg	5.5-6.5m																																																																										



Tree stakes	Pealed & pointed – variable diameter / shape Machine rounded – Consistent diameter along the length Dipped – Treated with preservative, not recommended for use with plants
Trimmed	A term applied to plants that have been trimmed in the container and are in the process for re-flushing
Tuber	A thickened underground part of a stem or rhizome serving as a food reserve bearing buds from which new plants arise
V	
Variety	A cultivar is selected and cultivated; some cultivars originate as sports or mutations on plants. Other cultivars could be hybrids of two plants, propagation by seed producing something different from the parent plant
W	
Waterlogging	Where the air spaces within soil are filled (saturated) with water
Wilt	A collapsed plant, caused by fungal disease or lack of water
Wire	Used for larger plants to contain the heavier root ball comprising of material and a wire basket tied around the base of the plant. These are usually mild steel and will rot away
Wire root ball (WRB)	Burlap / material nappy + wire 'cage' (see root ball)



Notes