

Did You Know?



Hops – *Humulus lupulus*

- *The female flower (also called a cone or strobile) of the hops plant, **Humulus lupulus**, is the part of the plant used to make beer and is responsible for the bitter flavor.*
- *The vine is referred to as a bine, the botanical term for a twining plant stem.*
- *Lupulin is the substance in the cone that contains the oils and resins which give hops their aroma.*
- *The hops plant is a fast growing vine which can grow over 15-30' tall in one season and is hardy to zone 5.*
- *Planted as a rhizome, hops prefer a sunny, moist location. It is dioecious, which means that male and female flowers occur on separate plants.*
- *There are many varieties of the hops plant and each has a distinctive flavor.*
- *While the brewing of beer with hops was first recorded in 822 AD, it is believed that beer brewing began thousands of years before that with spices and fruits instead of hops.*
- *Hops flowers can be used in cooking and can infuse flavor into a dish much like a bay leaf, or the flower can be grated and sprinkled on top of a dish. The stalks and leaves are edible too.*
- *In addition to culinary uses, hops are used in sleep pillows as well as fresh and dried flower arrangements.*
- *The bitter resins in the female hops flower are a sedative. This is why both regular and non-alcoholic beer make people drowsy.*
- *Hops historically have also been cultivated to treat anxiety, restlessness and sleeplessness.*
- *The antibacterial characteristics of hops also served as a preservative*
- *Americans have been growing hops since colonial times. Initially production was centered in the Northeast. Today Washington state leads the production in the United States.*
- *Up to two pounds of hops can be harvested per vine.*

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Growing Tips:

- *Select hops varieties based on desired flavor profile and hardiness based on USDA zone.*
- *Rich, loamy and well-drained soil, full sun and plenty of space.*
- *Rhizomes should be planted 3-5' apart on twine, pole or trellis, attached to allow approximately 12' of growth.*
- *Add mulch to ensure moisture retention in the soil, especially the first year.*
- *2-3 of the strongest vines are selected when they are a foot tall, and wrapped clock-wise around the support system. All other vines are then removed.*
- *Harvest before the first frost, when the cones feel dry and papery. They will have a strong aroma when crushed and reveal a yellow powdery substance.*
- *Dry the cones on a screen, out of direct sunlight, in a well ventilated area. Completely dried cones are stored in a cool, dark, dry place. They should also be stored in a sealable plastic bag with the air pushed out.*
- *Hops will die back to the ground each fall and will re-sprout early in the spring.*

More Resources:

American Hop Museum – americanhopmuseum.org

Hop Growers of America – usahops.org