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How to Plant & Maintain Itoh Peony

Itoh peonies (intersectional hybrids) are a cross between herbaceous and tree peonies, combining the best traits of both: huge, long-lasting flowers, robust tree-peony-like foliage, and the ability to die back to the ground. They feature strong, self-supporting stems that rarely need staking, with established plants producing up to 50+ blooms in shades of yellow, orange, and pink.

Key Characteristics and Care:

Appearance: They grow into a compact, rounded bush, roughly 1m tall & wide.

Flowering: They have an extended blooming season (often 3–4 weeks or more) compared to traditional peonies.

Growth Requirement: They thrive in full sun (or partial shade in hot climates) and require well-drained soil with a slightly acidic to neutral pH (6.5 –7.0).

Information: They are very hardy, drought-tolerant once established, and generally disease-resistant.

Pruning: In late autumn or early spring, cut the stems back to just above the ground, as they die back completely like herbaceous peonies

Location: Choose a sunny, permanent spot, as they dislike being moved.

Soil: Ensure excellent drainage and amend with compost. The pH should be around 6.5–7.0, adding lime if needed.

Planting Depth (Critical): Plant too deep, and they won't bloom. The "eyes" (buds on the roots) should be no more than 1–2 inches (2-5 cm) below the soil surface.

Spacing: 3 to 4 feet apart (roughly 60–90 cm) for air circulation.

Watering: Water thoroughly after planting. Keep them hydrated, especially during the first growing season, but not waterlogged.

Fertilising: Feed with a few handfuls of Dolomite Lime and slow-release fertiliser twice a year. Once on or around Melbourne Cup Day and once on or around Anzac Day. Be generous with the Dolomite Lime as without enough Dolomite Lime you will get leaves but no flowers. Water in.

Maintenance:

Mulch: Apply light mulch around the base, but not directly on the crown to prevent rot.

Support: Unlike herbaceous peonies, Itoh peonies usually do not need staking as they have strong stems.

Winter: They are hardy but remove dead foliage in late autumn to prevent disease.