

## PLANTING PEONIES



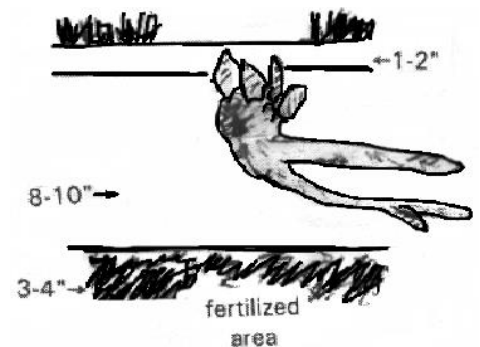
Mature Peony Root

### SITE SELECTION AND SOIL PREPARATION

- 1) Choose a sunny spot (at least 6 hours daily) with good ventilation and well-drained soil for your peony.
- 2) Loosen the soil sufficiently deep and wide to accommodate a mature peony root (2 feet deep and 3 feet wide). (Dig a \$100 hole if you want it to become a \$100 plant.)
- 3) If your soil is heavy to clay, mix in some potting soil or compost. Mix a handful of tulip/daffodil bulb fertilizer into the bottom of the hole, then put in some soil to prevent the roots from coming in direct contact with the fertilizer. Note: Bone meal and potash may be used in place of commercial fertilizer. The fertilizer used should have a smaller first number (nitrogen) than the following numbers. (In the acid soils of the Willamette Valley, add 1 cup of dolomite lime.) Do not use Miracle-Gro as it is instant release instead of slow release.
- 4) DO NOT PLANT PEONIES WHERE CASARON HAS BEEN USED!

### PLANTING BARE ROOT PEONIES

- 1) Plant the roots as soon as possible after receiving them in the Fall. The roots will keep for a period of time in the packing materials if you have to prepare their planting spot.
- 2) Place the 'eyes' pointing upward at the center of your planting site as 'eyes' will be at the center of the plant and new roots will fill out the circle around them. The peony 'eyes' are the growing points, which become the stems and flowers in the Spring. The 'eyes' are white, red or pink in color and look like the tip of your little finger. Lay the root piece flat on the soil, as that is the way it naturally grows, and cover it with soil. (Eyes will reorient themselves to point to the sun, so if some are pointing down don't be concerned.)
- 3) Cover root and eyes with soil. There should be only 2" of soil over the 'eyes' even in cold climates.
- 4) Water according to current moisture conditions. Note: None of the plant will be visible above ground until it begins to grow in early spring, so you may want to mark the spot where it is planted.
- 5) You can expect only 1 or 2 stems with a height of 6" the first spring. The number of stems should double the next year and the plant should be quite full by the 3<sup>rd</sup> season. When cutting flowers leave at least 3 leaf bracts on the plant to make food for plant growth.



### ON-GOING CARE:

- 1) Water as necessary in summer. We water the same as for our lawn. Too much water can cause the root to rot. The longer the foliage is green, the more the root develops and the stronger your plant will be.
- 2) In late October cut the peony stems off at ground level and put the stems and foliage in the garbage. This will reduce the chance of disease by reducing the number of fungal spores that cling to the foliage and cause botrytis in Spring.
- 3) Apply a handful of bulb fertilizer or a fertilizer with a lower first number twice per year: in spring when growth begins and again in the autumn when you cut the plants down.
- 4) If botrytis (gray mold) is a problem in your area, contact your local garden center for control measures. Symptoms include sudden wilting of leaves, stems that rot off at ground level and buds that turn black. Garden sprays used to control black spot in roses can be applied at 7-10 day intervals from first emergence until bloom.
- 5) Preen may be used for weed control in peony beds. Check with your local garden center for instructions on chemical use.

**Note: Peony growing points, called "eyes", should never be more than 2" below ground level.**