

# A Glossary of Garden Terms

How many times have you read a gardening article, looked at a website or catalog and wondered, "What does that mean?" Here is a list of garden terms for your referral during the upcoming garden season.

## **Acidic Soil**

A soil that has a pH below 7, typical of clay soils. Azaleas, camellias, dogwoods and roses like acidic soils.

## **Alkaline Soil**

A soil that has a pH of 7 or higher.

## **Annual Plant**

A plant living one year or less, usually planted in the spring after the last frost. During this time, the plant grows, blooms, produces seeds, and dies.

## **Balled & Burlapped**

The roots of the plant have soil attached and are held in place with burlap or some other material.

## **Bare Root**

The roots of the plant are bare, with no soil.

## **Biennial**

Of two seasons duration, from germination to maturity and death, usually developing vegetative growth the first year and flowering, fruiting, and dying the second year. Biennials need exposure to winter temperatures to trigger flowering or fruit production the second year.

## **Bulb**

A resting stage of a plant that is usually formed underground and consists of a short stem base bearing one or more buds enclosed in fleshy leaves and buds (tulip, daffodil, etc).

## **Corm**

A rounded, thick modified underground stem base bearing membranous or scaly leaves and buds (gladiolus, crocus, etc).

## **Crown**

The base of the plant, where the stem and root meet.

**Cultivar**

A cultivated variety or strain that originated and has persisted under human cultivation.

**Deadheading**

Removing the dead blossoms. If a plant is termed "self cleaning," the blossoms fall off on their own. Deadheading usually extends the blooming season.

**Deciduous**

A plant that loses its leaves seasonally, usually in the fall.

**Determinate**

The growth of a plant stops at a certain height (usually in reference to tomatoes).

**Dormancy**

A period in the life cycle of a plant where it is "asleep" and not actively growing. Dormancy is brought about by cool temperatures and shorter day length.

**Evergreen**

A plant that stays green year-round.

**Floriferous**

Bearing flowers/blooming freely.

**Germination**

The sprouting of a seed and the commencement of growth. Also used to describe the starting of plants from seeds.

**Grafted Plant**

The top (desirable) part of the plant is grafted onto rootstock, usually of a hardier or less rare plant.

**Heirloom Seed**

Mostly open-pollinated seed that have been planted and passed down for generations. Most lack disease resistance.

**Herbaceous**

A plant that dies back to the ground in winter and returns again in the spring.

**Herbicide**

A chemical used to destroy undesirable plants and vegetation.

**Hybrid Seed**

The result of cross-pollination of parents that differ in size, color, taste, or other traits. Seeds from hybrid plants cannot be saved and used again, as they will revert back to one of the parents.

**Indeterminate**

The plant continues growing until pinched or killed by frost (opposite of determinate). These plants usually require staking.

**Organic Seed**

A seed that has been grown and harvested without being exposed to any inorganic chemicals, fertilizers, hormones, etc.

**Pelleted Seed**

Small seed, such as petunias or pentas, that have been coated with an inert material such as clay to make them easier to handle.

**Perennial**

A plant that lives for three or more seasons. Perennials may not bloom the first season planted, especially ones that are shipped bareroot.

**Rhizome**

A somewhat elongated, usually horizontal subterranean plant stem that is often thickened by deposits of reserved food material that produces shoots above and below the roots (bearded iris).

**Rootstock**

Root system of a more common or hardy variety that is used to graft a more desirable variety onto, usually roses and/or standard forms.

**Self-Pollinating**

Plants that do not require pollen from another plant in order to produce fruit.

**Semi-Evergreen**

A plant that drops its leaves in cold areas but keeps at least some of them in milder zones (typically zones 7~11).

**Standard**

A shrub or herb grown with an erect main stem so that it forms or resembles a tree.

**Sucker**

Undesirable growth coming from the rootstock of a grafted plant.

**Treated Seed**

Seed that have been treated with an insecticide or fungicide to aid in preventing soil insects or disease from destroying the seed prior to germination.

**Tuber**

A short, fleshy, usually underground stem bearing minute scaly leaves, each of which bears a bud in its axil and is potentially able to produce a new plant (iris potato, caladium, tuberose begonia).

Courtesy of National Garden Bureau and Parks Seed Company