

How do I over-winter my banana plant ?

Firstly, you should refer to the information cards displayed for the variety of banana you have / want. This is because the levels of care needed vary widely, dependent on the variety. There is no one-size-fits-all answer. I highly recommend the YouTube videos by 'Yorkshire Kris' and 'Grow Paradise' as they are the best ones, they are full of sound advice and show you what to do.

- The hardiest varieties currently available are Musa Basjoo and Musa Sikkimensis. Mature plants should survive overwinter outdoors in the South of England. A general guide to maturity of these varieties is the thickness of their trunk. If the trunk is at least 1m tall and the thickness of a coke can, it should be fine. If it is smaller than that, it would be wise to pot it up and move it to a greenhouse or similar sheltered location, or it can be mulched and wrapped up.
- If left uncovered, the leaves will almost certainly go limp and brown. These can be left to hang around the trunk as they will provide a measure of insulation. Depending on what the weather is like, the trunk may freeze, or rot down completely. This is ok, the plant will quickly regrow once the weather warms up, even from ground level.
- The best way to wrap the banana is to make a cage from stakes and chicken wire / netting. Fill the cage up with straw or dry leaves / bracken, packing it in tightly and but be careful to not damage the trunks. When the top of the trunk is covered with leaves etc, wrap it with fleece round the sides, and put an old compost sack or bucket over the top part to stop the rain from getting in. Don't cover it completely with plastic or this will cause condensation and make the plant rot.
- Don't be tempted to wrap plants too soon as spending too long under wraps can be damaging. It's best to wait until it gets frosty at night. Unwrap it once the danger of frost has passed where you live.