

How do I look after my banana plant ?

These are general care guidelines for banana plants. Please read the specific cards displayed for each particular variety as some need more TLC or space than others.

- **Soil type.** Bananas like a fertile compost. Plain multi-purpose compost alone is not sufficient. The best mix would include John Innes 3, homemade compost from your compost heap, well-rotted manure (farmyard or horse). This applies equally to plants grown in pots or those planted into the ground - dig in plenty of good stuff into the planting hole before you put the banana in it.
- **Feeding.** Bananas are hungry plants. Give them a good growing medium first, and complement this with slow release plant food and / or liquid plant food. The best liquid feeds are those with a high nitrogen content (read the labels for NPK values). Lawn food works best, tomato food isn't great as this is designed for fruiting plants, and banana plants won't produce fruit in this country.
- **Watering.** Bananas are thirsty plants. If they are planted in pots they are wholly dependent on you for their water, so pay attention to the moisture levels in the pot. They need a moist soil, and pot grown ones should ideally have a water tray underneath the pot. Equally, you should ensure there are adequate drainage holes in the pots as they won't appreciate drowning - this is particularly important for winter care as a cold and wet plant is more likely to rot than a cold and dry one.
- **Outdoor position.** All bananas appreciate a warm, sunny and sheltered position. Try to find the least windy spot you can to grow them. If the leaves get shredded by the wind, don't cut them off - shredding is the plants defense mechanism as it stops the leaf rib from snapping. Only cut off completely brown and dried leaves.