



Question of the Week

Q: I moved into my house last summer, and there are several large peonies in the garden. What shall I do to be successful with them? I'd love to use them in flower arrangements.

A: Peonies do best in areas with well-drained soil and at least 6 hours of direct sun each day. When new growth is a few inches high, apply a mixed commercial fertilizer that has a ratio of 1-2-1. If spring showers are not abundant, thorough watering will increase the size and quality of flowers. If you want huge blooms, leave only the large, terminal bud on each stem. Because these plants produce such large flowers, you may want to support them with special circular wire "peony hoops." Do this early enough so plants can grow through the hoop. Ants on the flower buds don't eat or harm the plant. Remove old blossoms before the petals fall. Finally, when cutting flowers for arrangements, don't take more stem than you actually need; leave at least 2-3 leaves to produce food for the production of next year's flowers.

Got questions? UNH Cooperative Extension's Family, Home & Garden Education Center Info Line offers practical help finding answers for your lawn and garden questions. Call toll free at 1-877-398-4769, M-F, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., or Wednesdays, 5:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m. You can also email us at answers@unh.edu

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