

www.heathsandheathers.com

Care Instructions

The heather specialists

We have over 900 varieties in our

collection. Our display garden is one of the largest collections open to the public in the world. We preserve the old varieties and introduce new ones to the United States.

We ship across the entire country so we can help if you have a question about how they grow in your area.

We are here to help you succeed.

THE EXPERTS

Care Instructions for Heaths & Heathers

Phone and text:
360-427-5318

Email:

handh@heathsandheathers.com or

heathernursery@yahoo.com

Display Garden Address :

631 E Pickering Rd, Shelton, WA 98584

By appointment only. Check site for open days.

HEATHS & HEATHERS

Care Instructions

By Cindy Knight and Karla Lortz

Planting

Heather can usually be planted any time except during a really hot spell or a really cold spell. If planted at temperature extremes, it takes a lot more care. Plant heather in an area with full sun and good drainage. Some varieties will do okay with partial shade, but any colored foliage varieties will lose a lot of foliage color if they don't get enough sun. The plants may also get quite leggy and not look as good if they don't get enough light.

Heather is shallow rooted, so don't set your plants in the ground much deeper than they are in the container you transplant from. Prepare the planting hole about twice the size of the root ball. You can add peat moss or compost to the soil, but don't amend it so much that you create a "pot" of really great soil that the roots won't want to break out of. Working the amendments a bit beyond the actual planting hole will help the plant root out farther.

If your new transplants are root bound, score the root ball by lightly cutting into it, about ¼ inch with a knife or a pair of scissors, once on each side and across the bottom, but don't cut too deeply or into the crown.

Be sure to water in newly planted heather and keep soil moist for the first growing season. When adding mulch don't get too close to the crown of the plant. Once plants are fully established, most heathers have been shown to be reasonably drought tolerant although you will still need to give them some water during extra dry times of the year.

Your plants should be spaced about 3 feet apart on center or more regardless of the size plant you start with. Naturally, miniatures should be planted more closely together. Some of them are also larger.

Heather can be grown in containers, but most varieties will eventually outgrow the pot and will need to be replaced. Containerized heather needs to be watered more frequently than plants grown in the ground. They also need fertilizer on a regular basis. The pots need to be protected from really cold weather.

Fertilizer

Use a rhododendron type fertilizer at planting time and again as directed on the label. Once plants are established, they usually don't need too much extra fertilizing unless planted in a the drip line of the plants or the roots will be too deeply covered.

May need it more often in sandy soil. Keep fertilizer off the foliage. It can burn your plants if left on, and be sure to water it in so roots don't wind up burned too.

Cold Weather

If a sudden severe weather front is approaching with no good snow cover, it might be wise to temporarily cover a new planting with anything you can find such as evergreen boughs, leaves, cardboard, blankets, etc. If the plants have not hardened off with sufficient frosts, this is especially important. Snow is the best insulator. Don't be fooled by January weather. We are often in the mild 50's, and suddenly, February gives us cold weather again. You might need to protect them when it transitions back to cold. Make sure protection is removed once the cold is past or if it rains. Rain can rot the plants if they are still covered.

Pruning

Winter/spring heaths should be pruned when finished flowering. The plants will look a lot better in the long run. Every stem you clip should give you anywhere from two to five new shoots. Prune winter heaths by the end of May. If you prune much later, you will be cutting off next year's flowers that are forming. You don't want to go into winter with cut stems. The exception is mild California that can be pruned in the fall.

The summer blooming *Calluna vulgaris* varieties should be pruned to just below the flower blossoms. The area of the stem containing the actual flower buds has no leaf growth buds, so if it is *not* pruned off, you will have bare, woody stems that will never have foliage or flowers again. The *Erica* are not quite as fussy about being pruned annually. Prune these plants as needed to maintain them and to shape them. The *Daboecia* have blossoms which are above the foliage of the plant. Trim the blossoms off just below the flowers.

Some heaths and heathers have colorful new growth on their tips in the spring time. Their spring new growth color is better if the plant is pruned in the fall. If you prune in spring, you are cutting off all that colorful new growth. Those should be cut back as early as you can in late summer so they are healed over by winter. Those open cut stems are prone to damage and stem splitting in severe winters.

The ones that are red, gold, silver, etc. during winter should be left alone to color up. If you cut them back, you have a trimmed plant to look at as opposed to a taller and wider plant with lots of color.

Consider spraying your plants with Wilt-Pruf in late fall for winter protection. You can also spray through summer to protect them from the heat.

Things to remember

If you have a gardener prune for you, allow pruning only once per year. If pruned with every visit, they will barely bloom and look like silly balls instead of proper heather. Do not chop at the side of the heather in a line. They are like cut juniper in that you have bare woody cut stems at the chopped area and a misshapen plant.

If you do *not* intend to prune annually, do *not* buy heather or *Calluna vulgaris*. Buy only heaths or ericas. Those you can prune as you so choose.

CHECK OUT

**OUR STUNNING PHOTOS
PLANTING AND PRUNING VIDEOS
ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE @
HEATHS AND HEATHERS NURSERY**

Phone or text:
360-427-5318

Email:
handh@heathsandheathers.com
heathernursery@yahoo.com

www.heathsandheathers.com

Display Garden Sales and Hours 2026

We are a Mail Order Nursery first. You can visit by appointment throughout the year.

**Mail Order Hours to call to place orders or questions: 9 AM - 3 PM, Monday - Friday
Placing an order on-line gets priority over phone orders. On-line orders can be picked up by
appointment**

Display Garden Appointments that can be booked: Saturdays all day, Monday - Friday after 2 PM.

Nursery is Open officially March 9th - June 5th. Fall season is open September 1st - October 23rd.

**We are at the Display Garden most Saturdays in last half of March, all April and first half of May
pulling orders. That is a good time to make an appointment.**

**We pack Mail Orders on Sundays and weekdays at a different facility. CALL BEFORE YOU COME
OUT. It is a locked facility with no one there much of the time.**