



## **Phormium Frequently Asked Questions.**

### **1. Storage Conditions**

Phormium plants will last reasonably well packed in the cartons, but they can deteriorate without air movement around the plants. We have experienced plants being packed in the cartons for up to two weeks and they have still been in good condition, although showing signs etiolation through of lack of light and air movement. Storage of the cartons should be out of the sun and around 8 to 15 degrees C.

We suggest that if plants are not to be potted immediately, then they are unpacked from the boxes but kept undisturbed in the rolls. If the rolls appear too dry then water can be added to the plants while in the rolls. We have kept plants in these rolls for several months. In these rolls they can be kept in a glasshouse or shadehouse, or in normal phormium growing conditions.

### **2. Root Trimming**

We suggest that the plants be trimmed to 3-4 inches depending upon the size of the plants and the container size. It is important to ensure roots are properly planted. The plants have to grow new roots before they become fully established. We are not in favour of machine potting, for two reasons, firstly because the plants get pushed in and the roots can end up turned up rather than pointing down, and secondly because of achieving the correct height of the plant (see our diagram on the planting instructions).

### **3. Size to Pot Initially**

There are several factors involved here, not the least being the economics of re-potting. Generally Phormiums prefer a tight roots and will produce more side shoots if they are tight in the pot. We would think that to plant in say a 3 to 4 inch pot to start with to get established would be best, however, growers are successful growing straight into much bigger pots. More important than the pot is the free draining of the media.

4. **Fertility Program**

We use Osmocote 8-9 month at 9-11 pounds per cubic yard of media. (4-5kg per metre). This works out at 150 milligrams of N per litre of potting mix per month. It is a bit hard to translate this into imperial measurements.

We occasionally add an extra topdressing or liquid fertilizer if the plants appear to require it. We do not use liquid fertilizer as a routine fertilizer, however we estimate the rate at which liquid fertilizer should be used is 150ppm of N.

5. **Crop Times**

Conditions vary but we would expect the following: Plants will re-root in 6 to 8 weeks. They will grow into a full 6 inch container (quart) over one growing season. To fill a gallon container would take most of a second season. They can grow all year round provided temperature reaches say 15 degrees C in the day and the light levels are good. They grow fastest in late summer and into fall.

6. **Growing Conditions**

Best growing conditions are when day temperatures are in 25-28 degrees C with low humidity, 60% or less, and night temperatures down to 12-15 degrees C. These plants like air movement, closed humid glasshouses are not a good environment for Phormiums. We suggest shade in areas where temperatures exceed 30 degrees C. New Zealand has high light levels and Phormiums grow well in high light. The majority of Phormiums are grown in full sun.

7. **Availability**

This is always difficult. Much of the business is pre-ordered. At the moment nearly all the plants are available. For large volumes, say 5000 plus, of any one line ideally we would want orders submitted earlier.