



Handling Information for Bare Root Phormiums

Phormiums need to grow new roots to become re-established and begin growth. Careful handling and attention to the details of the growing conditions are needed to ensure that the new roots will grow and plants will become established.

We suggest the following:

1. Unpack cartons on arrival allowing air to circulate around the rolled plants. It is not necessary to unroll the plants if they are to be potted shortly. Remove rubber bands if they are tight. Investigate rolls and water if they are dry. Ensure that roots are kept moist until potting.
2. Pot into a free draining potting mix. We recommend an air filled space (AFS) of 20% or better. The mix we use is 50% peat and 50% volcanic sand (pumice 0.5 – 5 mm), pH 6.5. We advise the use of a low fertilizer compost in the early stages because the new roots are extremely sensitive to high fertilizer levels. Once established moderate fertilizer levels are suitable.

We advise against the use of Suscon Green because it may have detrimental effect on the re-rooting of the Phormium plants.

3. **Potting technique is important:**
 - We recommend hand potting for bare-rooted Phormiums.
 - Trim roots just prior to potting.
 - Do not cover the crown of the plant when potting, see diagram over page.
 - Firm in the pot but do not compress the potting media.
 - Water-in immediately after potting.
 - Plants may require support to stay upright. Do not pot the plant deep to keep upright.
 - Use a fungicide preventative drench.

4. **Growing conditions:**

- Hold newly potted plants out of direct sunlight and protected from severe wind exposure.
- Created by Paul Turner Shade houses, or shaded glasshouses which have significant air movement are ideal.
- Do not put Phormiums in closed glasshouses with no air movement and high humidity. These conditions will kill phormium plants.

5. **Watering:**

This needs to be carefully controlled in the early stages (first two months after arrival). Potting media should be moist but not waterlogged. We have found that light misting of the foliage every hour or so can help re-establishment provided that waterlogging does not occur.

In very wet and waterlogged conditions roots will rapidly rot and plants will die. Potting media needs to be moist but if your compost holds water like a sponge or there is surface moss or liverwort you will inevitably kill your phormiums. (check number 2 above on potting mix) A regular heavy watering to flush through the compost is necessary to avoid salt build up.

Careful crop management and attention to detail can achieve over 95% success rates. Once established, phormiums are extremely durable and need no particular nursery environment other than protection from the worst of winter cold and wet.

Points to remember:

- Phormiums need to grow new roots to re-establish.
- Use free draining potting mix.
- Do not pot deeply.
- Keep media moist –misting foliage is helpful

