

Growing Ginger indoors

Ornamental or Edible?

Ginger can be grown indoors very happily. Just picture those lush mountain hillsides of places like the Azores where the ginger lily (Hedychium) forms solid carpets of groundcover under the forest canopy. As a shade tolerant ornamental plant, the glossy green leaves on metre high (3ft) stems can be very effective.

The culinary form of ginger (Zingiber) is a little less ornamental but with a host of medicinal benefits attributed to it as well as the great flavours it provides, home grown root ginger can be a great talking point.

Getting started

Culinary ginger can be established very easily with a root bought from a local grocer. Beware of choosing a root that is not organic as some suppliers may treat the produce with a growth suppressant. If possible, find a rot that is already showing evidence of growing. The shiny, pale yellow 'eyes' that indicate a swelling growth bud are a good indicator.

Ornamental ginger will cost you a little more. Choose a healthy young plant from your local garden centre in late spring. There are plenty of named cultivars with slight variations in vigour, height and flower colour.

Plant in a well drained potting mix with the eyes just below surface level.

Caring for Hedychium

Choose a place out of direct sunshine – these plants will tolerate quite shady locations. Water well during the growing season and allow a little longer between watering during the winter months. A spring feed with a houseplant product will help to keep your ginger growing healthily.

If your plant is in a very dry environment it will benefit from occasion misting to help achieve the right level of humidity.



Caring for Zingiber

Choose a reasonably well lit spot out of direct sunlight. Water well throughout the growing season and feed occasionally with a seaweed based fertiliser.

Culinary ginger is not an evergreen plant. The foliage should die down in early winter which is a great time to lift the tubers and consider harvesting some.

Harvesting Ginger

If you want to harvest root ginger from your plant, simply lift it out and divide the tubers. Doing this while the plant is dormant gives you stronger, tastier results. Return a reasonable sized piece to your pot to continue growing and develop next year's crop.

Root ginger can be used fresh – it works very well sliced with a little lemon as a herbal tea – or it can be dried in the oven at low temperatures (or even better in a food dehydrator) and stored until needed.



Top Tip

If you enjoy growing your own ginger then you might like to consider adding it's close relative Tumeric to your collection. Sold in good garden centres as a lovely, distinctive houseplant called Cucurma...

