

St John's Wort

Hypericum perforatum · Hypericaceae

DIFFICULTY Easy

TYPE Herbaceous perennial, spreads via rhizomes and seed

MATURITY First year for light flowering

St John's Wort is a declared noxious weed in parts of Victoria, NSW, the ACT, Tasmania, and WA — exact status varies by local council area, so check with your own council or state biosecurity agency before planting. Separately, if used internally, it has serious interactions with oral contraceptives, antidepressants, and other prescription medications; this guide covers growing it, not using it — speak with a doctor before any internal use.



SUN
Full sun



WATER
Low, drought tolerant once established



SOIL PH
6.0–7.5



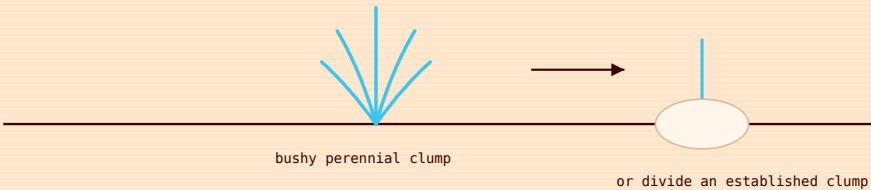
SPACING
30–45cm



DEPTH
as per pot

01 Two cautions before you plant

St John's Wort's star-shaped yellow flowers have a long history of traditional use, but this is a plant with strings attached — see the safety note above.



02 Planting

METHOD	Plant from a nursery pot, or grow from seed (needs a cold period to germinate well).
SOIL	Free-draining, moderately fertile.
TIMING	Plant in spring or autumn.

Planting timing varies significantly by Australian climate zone. Set your zone above (or use the Find My Climate Zone tool) for guidance tailored to your own area.

04 Problems

- **Root rot** — from poor drainage; ensure it's not sitting wet.
- **Spreading beyond the bed** — the main risk, via both rhizomes and self-seeding; deadhead before seed sets and divide regularly.
- **Very few other pests** — a hardy, easy-going perennial.
- **Powdery mildew** — humid, crowded conditions; space well for airflow.

06 Companions & rotation

PLANT NEARBY	AVOID NEARBY	ROTATION NOTE
Best given its own contained spot, given its weed status	Areas bordering bushland or waterways, given its weed status	Not applicable — long-lived perennial, spreads by rhizome and seed.

03 Growing care

- Water moderately while establishing; one of the most drought-tolerant plants on this site once settled.
- Deadhead spent flowers to extend the bloom period.
- Cut back dead growth in late autumn once it dies down.
- Divide congested clumps every 2–3 years to keep them contained and vigorous.

05 Harvest & storage

SIGNS	Flowers ready once petals fully open, usually from the first season onward.
METHOD	Snip whole flower heads once fully open; leaves can be picked any time.
CURING	Air-dry flowers and leaves on a tray out of direct sun.
STORAGE	Dried flowers keep for months in an airtight container.
PRESERVING	See Dehydrating for ways to keep a surplus.