

FLOWERS · A SUNNY PORCH, PATIO, OR BALCONY

Let's grow geranium.

Pelargonium × hortorum — compact zonal types

This plan is for **Compact zonal geranium**

Is this your plant? Choose a compact zonal geranium (*Pelargonium × hortorum*). This sunny outdoor pot plan is not for hardy cranesbills, regal geraniums, or trailing ivy types; pause its feeding schedule when overwintering indoors.

Classic patio flowers in one easy pot.

12 in. wide × 12 in. deep

1 nursery plant

Before you start

Acclimate outdoors over 7–10 days after frost danger. Before frost, bring a healthy zonal geranium into bright indoor light and pause this outdoor feeding recipe.

By [jennyzhuang](#)

Sources checked September 25, 2026 [View sources](#)



LIGHT

Loves the sun

Choose at least 6 hours of direct sunlight for a good flower display.



WATER

Let the surface dry

Check daily; water when the upper inch of mix feels dry.



FEEDING

A measured feed for flowers

Use the enriched mix first, then feed an actively flowering outdoor plant every 14 days.



Pelargonium geraniums are toxic to cats and dogs if eaten. Keep the pot and discarded cuttings away from pets that chew plants.

BEFORE YOU START



Your little kit.

- ✓ 1 compact zonal geranium nursery plant
- ✓ One 12-inch-wide, 12-inch-deep draining pot
- ✓ Fresh potting mix, a watering can, and small snips

THE SOIL

Miracle-Gro Organic Potting Mix (US, with starter nutrients; check your bag for its additional-feeding directions)

Start with what's on this list. Add plant food only when the feeding section says it's needed.

YOUR SIMPLE GROWING PLAN



One pot. Here's the plan.

A sunny porch, patio, or balcony. Start with **nursery plant**.



THE POT

12 in. wide × 12 in. deep

A roomy single-plant layout, not a minimum for all geraniums. Choose a compact zonal type with roughly 12–18 inches of mature growth.



HOW MANY

1 nursery plant

Look for “zonal geranium” or *Pelargonium × hortorum*, rather than a hardy cranesbill.

THE CONTAINER

**12 in. wide × 12 in.
deep**



START WITH

1 nursery plant



Illustration · not to scale

12 in. wide × 12 in. deep · 1 nursery plant A roomy single-plant layout, not a minimum for all geraniums. Choose a compact zonal type with roughly 12–18 inches of mature growth. Look for “zonal geranium” or *Pelargonium × hortorum*, rather than a hardy cranesbill. Original illustration; not to scale.

01 Choose the zonal type

Pick a stocky plant with healthy leaves and several buds. A compact zonal geranium fits this plan; trailing ivy and regal geraniums have different habits.

02 Plant at the nursery level

Set the root-ball surface level with the new mix. Leave 1 inch below the rim, firm gently, and water until excess drains.

03 Move into sun gradually

Acclimate a greenhouse-grown plant over 7–10 days, beginning in a sheltered spot and increasing sun exposure. Keep it outdoors only after local frost danger has passed.

04

Remove finished flower stems

Follow each faded flower stalk to its base and snip it off. This keeps the display tidy and stops energy going into seed.

Help with the setup: [drainage holes and saucers](#) · [potting mix vs. garden soil](#).

Other ways to start

Keep a cutting from a healthy plant

Take a healthy, nonflowering 2–4-inch stem tip using clean tools. Remove leaves from the lower half, insert that bare stem into moist perlite or propagation mix, and keep it in bright indirect light. Keep the rooting medium lightly moist and remove any decaying leaves. Pot up after a new root system has formed.

Grow a seed geranium

Buy seed labeled as compact zonal Pelargonium and follow its sowing directions indoors. Allow roughly 13–15 weeks from seed to flowers under suitable conditions, plus gradual outdoor acclimation. A nursery plant is quicker for the first pot. Seed-grown plants need not match a named cutting-grown parent.

YOUR EVERYDAY ROUTINE



Water & fertilizer at a glance.



WATER WHEN

Check each morning. Let the upper inch dry, then water slowly and let excess drain. Wait if damp.



FERTILIZER

Jack's Classic Blossom Booster (US 10-30-20)



AMOUNT

1 level tablespoon in 1 US gallon of water



WHAT THAT AMOUNT COVERS

Mix into water. Apply only enough solution to wet this pot and drain; the mixing batch is not the amount to pour on.



HOW OFTEN TO FEED

Every 14 days while the outdoor plant is budding or flowering.



WHEN TO START OR PAUSE

Follow the mix's bag for when additional feed begins. Delay if wet; stop this outdoor recipe indoors for winter or when growth stops.

JR Peters supplies the outdoor concentration. The 14-day interval follows Iowa State's container-geranium guidance; it is less frequent than the brand's general outdoor schedule.

01 / EVERYDAY CARE

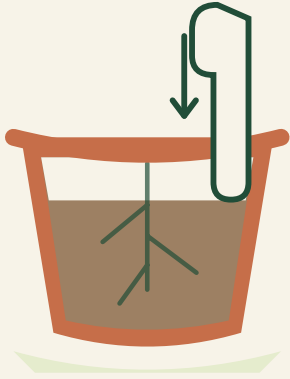


When to water.

Check the pot each morning. Let the upper inch dry, then water the soil slowly until excess drains. Leave a damp pot alone and empty standing water from its saucer. Sun, wind, and a full root system increase demand; a cool cloudy week reduces it. Wet, wilting plants need a drainage check rather than another automatic drink.

CHECK

Top 1 in.
dry



WATER

Wet the
root zone



LET IT DRAIN

Let excess
water drain



Water slowly until it drains; empty the saucer

Illustration · not to scale

Check before watering. Check each morning. Let the upper inch dry, then water slowly and let excess drain. Wait if damp. Original illustration; not to scale.

The easy rule

Check first. Water only when the plant needs it.

02 / PLANT FOOD



Exactly what to feed it.

Start with the nutrients already in the named potting mix. Check your purchased bag for when to begin additional feeding; do not assume every enriched mix feeds for the same number of weeks. Another mix may contain a different starter feed or none. Do not add a second full feeding program at planting. Begin the outdoor flower feed below only when additional feeding is due and the plant is actively growing.

MEASURE

1 level tbsp

DISSOLVE

1 US gal water

USE WHAT IS NEEDED

**Wet the roots;
let excess drain**



Mixing batch ≠ a whole-pot serving

Illustration · not to scale

1 level tablespoon in 1 US gallon of water Mix into water. Apply only enough solution to wet this pot and drain; the mixing batch is not the amount to pour on. Every 14 days while the outdoor plant is budding or flowering. Follow the mix's bag for when additional feed begins. Delay if wet; stop this outdoor recipe indoors for winter or when growth stops. Original illustration; not to scale.

US PRODUCT REFERENCE

Jack's Classic

Blossom Booster

10-30-20

Soluble: mix into water

Check the official US product ↗

Illustrated reference; check the manufacturer's current packaging and US label.



A SPECIFIC US PRODUCT

Jack's Classic Blossom Booster (US 10-30-20)

Dissolve 1 level tablespoon of Jack's Classic Blossom Booster 10-30-20 in 1 US gallon of water. After the starter feed, apply to the roots every 14 days while the outdoor plant is budding or blooming. JR Peters supplies the concentration; this guide chooses the 2-week end of Iowa State's 2-4-week container-geranium interval. Use only enough solution to water the pot and drain. Delay if wet and avoid a second full-rate fertilizer. Stop this outdoor recipe when moving the plant indoors for winter or when active growth stops.

Check the manufacturer's product page ↗

The outdoor concentration comes from JR Peters. The 14-day interval follows the 2-4-week container-geranium range from Iowa State; it is less frequent than the brand's general outdoor schedule.

03 / WHAT HAPPENS NEXT



Flowers through the frost-free season

A nursery plant already in bud can give color soon and continue through the frost-free season. Deadheading and sun help. Growth and bloom can slow during extreme heat or after a change of location.

When to plant outside or bring indoors

Plant outside after frost danger. Zonal geraniums are tender *Pelargonium* plants; a cold-winter garden will not keep them alive outdoors. Bring a healthy pot into a bright indoor spot before frost if you want to save it.

For regional planting windows, [find your local Cooperative Extension office](#) ↗.



Something looking off?

Is this a hardy geranium for an English-style border?

No. Garden centers often call *Pelargonium* "geranium." Hardy geraniums, also called cranesbills, belong to the genus *Geranium* and are separate perennial plants. This is the familiar patio-pot flower.

Why do I get leaves but few flowers?

Check sun first, then remove finished flower stalks. Avoid repeatedly adding fertilizer to compensate for shade. Extreme temperatures can also slow flowering.

Why are the lower leaves yellow?

Check whether the mix stays wet and whether drainage holes are clear. Some old leaves naturally age, but widespread yellowing or soft dark stems can point to root trouble. Do not diagnose a fertilizer shortage from color alone.



Saving the plant and removing faded flowers

Bring a healthy pot indoors before frost

Before frost, inspect for pests and bring the plant to a sunny window or grow light. Water when the mix begins drying, with longer gaps as growth slows. Pause the outdoor feeding schedule; a winter windowsill is a different growing situation. Trim leggy spring growth, then acclimate gradually before returning it outdoors after frost.

Remove faded flower stalks and fallen petals

Remove faded flower stalks and fallen petals, and clear decaying leaves from the mix. Water under the foliage and avoid crowding the pot against other plants.



Help with your next step.

Set up a pot that drains

Choose drainage holes and manage the saucer before you plant.

Read the fertilizer already in your mix

Check the actual bag before adding a second fertilizer program.

BEHIND THIS GUIDE

Where the advice comes from.

Plant care is based on the sources below. Planting layouts and beginner routines combine that guidance into one practical plan; they are editorial choices, not results from a Plant Care Steps growing trial.

- [Iowa State: annual geranium types, light, deadheading, and winter care ↗](https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/growing-annual-geraniums)
<https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/growing-annual-geraniums>
- [Iowa State: container geranium watering and feeding ↗](https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/faq/how-do-i-care-garden-geraniums)
<https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/faq/how-do-i-care-garden-geraniums>
- [Iowa State: geranium seed starting ↗](https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/how-grow-geraniums-seed)
<https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/how-grow-geraniums-seed>
- [JR Peters: Blossom Booster product identity ↗](https://www.jrpeters.com/online-store/Blossom-Booster-10-30-20-p184837332)
<https://www.jrpeters.com/online-store/Blossom-Booster-10-30-20-p184837332>
- [Manufacturer: US fertilizer formula and application directions ↗](https://www.jrpeters.com/copy-of-draft-resources-for-garden-ce)
<https://www.jrpeters.com/copy-of-draft-resources-for-garden-ce>
- [Manufacturer: starter feed in the named potting mix ↗](https://scottsmiraclegro.com/en-us/brands/miracle-gro/products/potting-mix/miracle-gro-organic-potting-mix/78951430.html)
<https://scottsmiraclegro.com/en-us/brands/miracle-gro/products/potting-mix/miracle-gro-organic-potting-mix/78951430.html>
- [Iowa State: taking 2-4-inch annual cuttings ↗](https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/how-propagate-annuals-cuttings)
<https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/how-propagate-annuals-cuttings>
- [ASPCA: Pelargonium geraniums and pets ↗](https://www.aspcapetcare.org/pet-care/aspca-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants/geranium)
<https://www.aspcapetcare.org/pet-care/aspca-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants/geranium>

Something needs updating? [Suggest a correction](#)

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Compiled with AI assistance. These first-edition guides have not yet had an independent horticultural review. Read our editorial approach.