

## GREEN TEA PLANT

**Latin Name:** *Camellia sinensis*

**Initial Instructions:** After unpacking, allow the plant a few days to gradually acclimate to full exposure. If you are keeping your green tea plant in a container, re-pot it into a 6-8 inch diameter pot. The plant will require re-potting to a larger container as it grows. Up-pot when the plant appears root bound or when large roots push out the drainage holes.

**Cultivation:** Allow the soil to dry out a bit between waterings. Protect your plant during the winter the first year until it is well established. In areas colder than zone 7, bring plants indoors to a bright window or into a greenhouse during the winter months.

**Size at Maturity:** 8-10 feet high and wide, or smaller in a container.

**Pests & Diseases:** Green tea plants are not bothered by pests or diseases.

**Soil Type:** Standard potting soil in containers, well-drained, light sandy or medium loamy soils in the ground. Tea plants prefer acidic soil, pH range of 4.5 to 6 pH is optimal.

**Light Requirements:** Part to full shade.

**Hardiness:** Green tea plants are hardy to about 0°F.

**Bloom Time:** September-November

**USDA Zone:** 7

**Harvesting:** Pick tender, young shoots with 2-3 leaves.

### Tea Preparations:

- Green Tea is made from steamed and dried leaves.

Allow surface water on the leaves and shoots to dry in the shade for up to a few hours. Steam the leaves in a vegetable steamer for less than one minute, or roast in a hot cast iron skillet for a few minutes. This process is called "sha qing" (killing out) in Chinese; the oxidizing enzymes are killed by the heat. Dry the leaves in an oven set at 250°F for 20 minutes. This step stops fermentation and removes any moisture in the leaf so it won't mold. Your green tea is now ready to enjoy!

- Oolong Tea is made from partially fermented leaves. Spread a thin layer of freshly picked leaves in the sun until they wilt (30 minutes to one hour depending on temperature). Bring them indoors, and allow them to wither at room temperature for a number of hours, gently agitating them every hour by hand. This process causes the edge of the leaf to turn red, and the moisture content to drop about 20%. These processes cause biochemical and enzymatic reactions, which in turn produce the unique aroma and colors found in Oolong teas. Dry the leaves in an oven set at 250°F. for 15-20 minutes. This stops the enzymatic process. Enjoy your Oolong Tea!

- Black Tea is made from leaves that have been fermented then dried. Allow freshly picked leaves to dry on racks for 10-20 hours, bringing down the internal moisture of the leaf to between 60% and 70% of the original moisture. This step makes the leaf more pliable for the next step. Bruise the leaves by rolling in your hands or crushing them until they are darkened and crinkled, allowing the fermentation process to begin. Continue until the leaves turn a bright, copper penny color. Allow the leaves to ferment by placing them in thin layers on a tray in a shady location. After 2-3 days dry the leaves in an oven set at 250°F for 20 minutes. This step removes all the water in the leaves and stops the fermentation process. It also seals in the flavor. Store tea in an airtight container.

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