

SIMPLE STEPS FOR HEALTHIER BANANAS

If you want to get the best out of your bananas, don't let too many plants grow in the one clump.

Letting a clump of bananas get bigger does not mean you will get more fruit, in fact the opposite is usually the case.

1. Stick to the '1-2-3 Principle'

Ideally you want to have one stem that is maturing and throwing a bunch of bananas, one 'follower' which will be the next to produce a bunch, plus a sucker which will then be the next in line (see photo right).

Therefore, you should take out any extra suckers that are coming up around the mother plant. This can be done with a desuckering gouge, a mattock or sharp spade.



2. Starting afresh?

Make sure that you use clean, disease free suckers or tissue culture plants available from QBAN nurseries.

- Plant in soil that is rich in organic matter, in a well-drained position
- Plant in full sun but sheltered from the wind
- Plant at least 2 metres from other plants

3. Tips for getting the best out of your bananas

- Fertilise with a product that is rich in nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium 2 or 3 times a year
- Cut off bottom leaves that are diseased or brown and dying. (There are some diseases which affect banana plants and cause yellowing of the leaves, but if the leaves are cut off, the plant should still manage to produce healthy bananas).
- Inspect your plants and emerging leaves regularly – watch out for Bunchy Top.
- Make sure you desucker and stick to the 1-2-3 Principle.
- Keep weeds clear around banana plants so they have no competition for the nutrients.
- Cut off the bell of the bunch once the whole bunch has emerged – this will help the fruit to fill faster.
- Bagging the bunch will protect the fruit while ripening.
- You can have larger fruit if you trim off the bottom two hands of the bunch.
- Once you have harvested the bunch, cut down the trunk and allow the follower to take its place.