

Featured Perennial

Helleborus – Lenten Rose, Christmas Rose

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Photo Credit: Harriett McMillan

Botanic name:	<i>Helleborus</i> sp.
Common name:	Christmas Rose, Lenten Rose
Height:	15 - 18 inches
Spread:	15 inches
Light:	Shade to Part Shade
Water:	Moderate Watering
Soil:	Average garden soil with moderate organic amendment
Growth Habit:	Upright clumps with rounded form
How to use:	Use in perennial beds and borders or around the base of shrubs

All species of Hellebore are worthy candidates for Colorado gardens, but they have been somewhat underused until recently. They are best grown in shade or partly shaded locations especially considering the higher elevation, bright sunlight and dry air that prevail in Colorado. The dark green, leathery textured leaves are nearly evergreen throughout the year and that alone is reason for adding to the landscape. The old foliage eventually withers away in late winter to make way for fresh foliage in early spring.

Hellebores flower early in the year, hence the two most common names, Christmas Rose and Lenten Rose. Consider planting Hellebores near a walk, patio or to the front of a border where the flower display can be enjoyed. Be sure to amend the soil with compost when you plant. Once established, Hellebore is truly a low maintenance perennial. The clumps of *Helleborus niger* (Christmas Rose) and *Helleborus orientalis* (Lenten Rose) will increase in size slowly over the years, but rarely need division. One species, *Helleborus foetidus*, will reseed readily and naturalize in areas.

Once established, Hellebore needs to be watered thoroughly every 7 to 10 days if the weather is dry. They are excellent accent plants beneath trees and shrubs or as companion plants in shaded borders with Bleeding Heart, Hosta and Heuchera. Be sure to look for Hellebore plants at your local independent garden center and enjoy their subtle beauty in your garden for years to come.



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