

## Pick of the Week: Hellebore

A colorful perennial for late winter, spring

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**Common name:** Hellebore

**Genus/Species:** *Helleborus orientalis*

**Family:** Ranunculaceae

**Description:** Hellebore is a perennial that blooms in late winter and spring. It grows to be 12 to 18 inches tall with a spread of 18 to 24 inches. It should be planted in shade or partial shade. Hellebore grows from rhizomes in tight clumps that have many growing points. It is a widely variable plant that is appreciated for its attractive foliage. Each leaf consists of a stalk with basal leaves that have five to 11 toothed leaflets. The 2- to 4-inch-wide flowers may be pink, white, purple, cream or green. It is suitable for containers, woodland gardens, borders or as groundcover. All parts of this plant are poisonous if ingested.

**Propagation:** The flowers turn into seeds, and the plant clumps get bigger each year.

**Cultivation:** Plant hellebore in well-drained soil rich in organic matter. Once established, it does not like to be moved.

**Pests:** There are no pests of concern. Diseases of concern include root rot and leaf spot.

**Comments:** Stems die back after blooming before new stems emerge. Remove dead stems for neat appearance.

**Availability:** Available in most nurseries.

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/08/13/HORU118AF4.DTL>

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