

Banana

Musa spp. · *Banana family*

DIFFICULTY Easy in the right climate
TYPE Giant perennial herb (not a true tree)
MATURITY 9–15 months to first bunch



SUN
Full sun,
sheltered from
wind



WATER
High, consistent



SOIL PH
5.5–6.5



SPACING
2–3m



DEPTH
as per sucker

01 One stem fruits once, then dies

Each banana stem flowers and fruits only once, then is cut down — but it leaves behind suckers at the base that grow on to fruit in following seasons, keeping the clump going indefinitely.



loose stake, first year

02 Planting

METHOD	Plant a sucker (pup) from an established clump.
SOIL	Rich, moisture-retentive, high organic matter.
TIMING	Plant in spring in warm, frost-free, sheltered zones.

04 Problems

- **Wind damage** — shelter is essential.
- **Frost damage** — only suited to frost-free zones or heavily protected microclimates.
- **Bunchy top virus** — stunted, bunched leaves; remove and destroy affected plants promptly.
- **Panama disease** — soil-borne wilt; choose resistant varieties where it's present locally.

03 Growing care

- Water heavily and consistently — bananas are thirsty plants.
- Shelter from strong wind, which shreds the large leaves.
- Feed generously — a heavy feeder throughout growth.
- Remove excess suckers, leaving 2–3 of different ages per clump for a staggered harvest.

05 Harvest & storage

SIGNS	Fingers fatten and round out, though colour often develops off the plant.
METHOD	Cut the whole bunch, then cut down the spent stem to make way for suckers.
CURING	Ripen at room temperature, hung or laid flat.
STORAGE	Room temperature to ripen; refrigerate once ripe to slow further ripening (skin darkens but flesh is fine).

06 Companions & rotation

PLANT NEARBY	AVOID NEARBY	ROTATION NOTE
Ginger Taro	Exposed, windy positions	Not applicable — long-lived perennial clump.