

Pregnant Onion -- Ornithogalum Caudatum, O. longibracteatum Growing Instructions

The Pregnant Onions are wonderful novelty plants for indoors or out. They grow quite well in either place. If it freezes in your area, they should be brought inside. They have an onion shape, and the bulb grows on the top of the soil. The babies grow under the skin making the bulb look as if it's pregnant. Once the little bulb-lets free themselves from the mother, just sit them on top of the soil (pointed side up) and they will root and grow. The larger plants will bloom in mid to late summer with tall spikes of white flowers.

These plants are extremely drought tolerant, and if necessary can go without water for long periods of time, although they do prefer to be watered. You would really have to work overtime to kill one of these. All you will have to do is watch her create a family for you.

Planting / Growing Instructions:

Your plant has been through a lot of stress the last couple of days. To help it recover, I suggest planting it in a pot that can be kept in a warm and shady location for a few days. The thing your plant really wants is a nice drink of water to help it get over the transplanting and long, dry trip.

Unless you live in the warmest zones (10 or warmer), you'll need to keep your pregnant onion plant as a container plant. Use well draining, sandy soil in your container (I suggest using an orchid or cactus mix or even straight builder's sand but NOT regular potting soil – it stays too wet) and, after giving it a good drink when you first plant it, water only about once a week, or if the soil dries, after that. Although I've read that this plant can grow in full sun, I keep mine in bright shade. It will like a spot on your porch, lanai or under the edge of a shade tree during the warm months and a bright windowsill during the winter. Of course, you can keep it indoors all year round, if you like.

The majority of the round bulb stays ABOVE GROUND LEVEL. When planting, plant the roots and about ¼" of the bulb (that's ¼ INCH, not ¼ of the bulb) underground (just enough to stabilize the plant), if your plant needs more stabilization to stay upright, then pack pea gravel around the base of it for support, but leave the remainder of the bulb above ground. It is not unusual for the leaves to yellow on the ends from the stress of shipping, but new leaves will start to grow quickly after it gets re-established in its new home and new babies will follow!

To start the babies, I put some well draining potting mix in a pot, then cover it with a layer of pure coarse construction sand (white sand like they use for sandboxes or sandblasting) about ½ deep, then a layer of small gravel. I stick the babies, fat, round end down, pointed end up, into the sand about ½ way, the gravel helps hold them up straight and keeps water from sitting on them. Water sparingly as with the large plants, be careful not to knock them over or out of the sand when you water. They take a while to root and start growing, patience is a virtue ...



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