

Garden Cane Wigwams

Plant supports in the garden can be both a design element and a practical aid for growing climbing plants - edible and ornamental. Supports can be a focal point, create colour contrasts, vary the levels of planting and can add visual depth to your garden space.

Do you have a boring mass of planting? Think wrought iron obelisk supporting a scrambling rose cascading aloft a mundane hebe. Or a simpler cane wigwam structure, propping up the crimson flowers of a runner bean, standing as watch tower over rows of lettuce.

Making garden cane wigwams is ideal for a winter afternoon's activity. Choose bright colours or more placid tones. Make tall ones or short ones. Place them where they'll inject interest during the duller days. Create even more height by placing a wigwam in a planter or pot: an easy means of adding more verticals at the back of a border.

And as herbaceous plants start their spring growth, place wigwams in readiness to support their swift soft upright growth before the wind and rain render them as ground cover.



What you will need:

- **Garden canes** of various lengths (or harvested willow stems, or recycle unwanted strips of wooden baton, plumbers pipe.....)
- **Water repellent paint** (if colour required)
- **Paint brushes**
- **Garden twine** (or garden foliage e.g. phormium leaves)

What to do:

- Allow between 5 and 7 canes of the same length for each wigwam.
- If colour is required, apply at least two coats of paint. Allow to dry completely.
- Firmly insert the canes into the soil in a circle around the diameter of the herbaceous clump of new growth, around the inside rim of a pot/planer (with compost in) or choose your own size for the base of a stand along wigwam. Experiment with sizes—the more varied the better!
- Pull the tops of the canes together and securely bind with twine or plant foliage.
- If the structure has to support climbing/sprawling plants, use twine to make a mesh/trellis effect infill.
- To make mesh/trellis infill: Start approx. 10cm above the soil surface, knot the start of the string around the first cane, then working in one direction, wrap the string over and around each cane, ensuring that the twine remains taut as you complete the first loop back to the first cane. Gradually work your way up the wigwam in a helter-skelter fashion, keep the twine taut, and finally secure tightly at the top.
- Stand back and admire!