

Tregothnan

PLUCK: The first flush is picked by hand at dawn with just the top two leaves and the bud taken from branches of the *Camellia sinensis* bush. The leaves are then laid onto bamboo or straw mats to allow gentle withering.

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WITHER: A warm, dry area is necessary for the leaves to become limp and pliable. The atmospheric conditions affect the amount of time required for the leaves to be withered.

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ROLL: Rolling is a crucial stage in processing black tea. Traditionally rolled by hand (a circular movement between the palms), the more intense the rolling, the stronger the resulting flavour. The leaves should disintegrate in your hands and curl easily into balls as their cell structures become broken and bruised with rolling.

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OXIDISE: The next step is oxidisation. This involves spreading the rolled leaves on a flat surface and keeping them at a controlled temperature. As the natural liquids in the cells interact, the colour changes from green to brown. Green tea varies in that oxidisation is replaced by steaming, retaining the natural green colour.

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DRY: The final stage is to dry the leaves to around 5% moisture. For small quantities of tea, a warming oven is ideal. Once the leaves have reduced to a darkened, crisp crunchy state, they are ready for drinking. The 'bush to cup' process at Tregothnan takes just 36 hours. All processes are entirely chemical free and have been sustainable for over 4,000 years.



TEA BUSH CARE NOTES

Now you have safely received your new plant, here are some important guidelines. Extra care now will reward you in the future with tea! Every care has been lavished on each plant to assist in its successful transplantation. Most tea plants establish better if planted as small young stock.

WATER / FEED: Keep the plant moist. Watering should be frequent enough to prevent the roots from drying out. Avoid watering onto leaves during strong sunlight. If purchased in the winter months, the bush should have a bright, indoor home until Spring. In Spring and Summer, any good fertiliser high in nitrogen can be applied to the soil.

PLANT: If your minimum winter temperatures do not fall below -3°c then you may plant your tea bush outside - a semi-shaded site is best. Keep the roots as intact as possible. A generous hole should be dug to allow a back fill of soil with some organic matter. The bushes require a special pH - below neutral, 4.5 is ideal. If you are unsure of your soil type then you can keep the bush in a pot. Increase the pot size gradually at a rate of half a litre every year. Stake and tie if required. Add a general fertiliser - liquid or granular.

PRUNE: Once your tea plant is established, pruning to a desired shape is encouraged. A one metre plant with a flattish top is your goal - this is called a 'plucking table.'

ENJOY: Your plant should reward you with years of pleasure, but Tregothnan cannot accept responsibility for the plants once they enter your care. We look forward to assisting you with any future requirements.

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