



## Winter Protection for Bananas

There are a wealth of truly incredible herbaceous plants that can be grown in the UK with massive foliage and stunning exotic-looking flowers such as bananas, gingers, and Cannas. They can be planted in their pots until winter when they can be lifted and placed in a frost-free greenhouse or shed. The other option is to plant them in the ground and give them protection in situ - as illustrated below - but this is best done after a light frost has blackened the foliage which will generally trigger dormancy. Cannas and Gingers are best protected by cutting them back to a few inches above ground and then covering with a layer of straw or good compost to a depth of at least a foot or more in colder areas. Hardy bananas can be treated in the same way but if you want to keep the height gained over the growing season the trunks will need to be protected as illustrated below. Please bear in mind that there are many variations for wrapping plants for the winter and the directions given below are just for guidance - feel free to be as creative as you like!



1. As an example, we are using *Musa basjoo* which is a wonderful root hardy banana. The specimen just behind Bruce is just 3 years old.

2. After the first mild frosts cut all the leaves off the banana just above the top of the stem.



3. In this example we are protecting two stems of the clump at the same time. Notice that the Banana is positioned with bamboo clumps protecting it from strong winds.

4. The next step is to create a pyramid of bamboo canes around the trunks using three or four canes. The top of the pyramid should be at least six inches above the top of the trunks. Perforated drainage pipe can also be used, but we prefer the look of the pyramid.





5. Tie the canes together at the top with strong twine or wire.

6. Fill the pyramid up with straw, being careful to surround the trunks completely without damaging them.



7. When the canes are full wrap twine around the structure to keep the straw in place. Remember to smile it's a great job done!

8. To finish, fleece can be wrapped around the canes and securely tied. This will offer even more protection to less hardy plants and stop the straw being pulled or blown out. For larger plants use BIG canes or timber pallets securely fixed together.

