

Fact Sheet: GUIDE TO PLANT PROPAGATION

Traditional favorites, family heirlooms and tropical beauties start life anew with cuttings, stems and roots producing new generations.

Rooting

For most garden varieties place the outgrowth in soil or water as soon as possible after removal from the mother plant. Remove from water as soon as root tendrils appear. If started off in soil, repot when new growth indicates readiness for transplant. A rooting hormone can be used to stimulate the process. A plastic bag placed over cutting creates a miniature greenhouse. Propagation is most successful when the plant is in a stage of active growth.

If this doesn't work, and it won't for some plants, there are other more complicated methods of reproduction.

Stem Cuttings Use a sharp knife or other cutting instrument to remove a stem with active growth nodes. Be sure to include at least one node from under the soil (about an inch from the bottom of the cutting). Although it depends on the plant, most cuttings should range from two to six or eight inches. Remove any leaves at the bottom before setting in medium. Tamp the mix around the stem in soil. For most cuttings avoid full sun while they are rooting. About 50 percent shade or filtered light is usually recommended but not full sun. These beginners do best with warmth and humidity in soil kept moist but not drenched.

Leaf Cuttings

Water the plant well preferably the day before you take a leaf specimen to ensure that it holds enough moisture and does not deteriorate too rapidly. Select one or more leaves that show off the appearance of the plant at its best. The younger the better because when the surface is not weathered they root more easily than mature leaves. Place the leaf cuttings in moist compost in a pan on a cool well-shaded windowsill and cover with plastic. As soon as roots and shoots begin to develop, remove the plastic covering to lower the temperature for growing plants. Many root more quickly if you lightly score the stem where it will rest on the soil.

A Miniature Greenhouse

Root cuttings in a container covered with plastic will root and develop into plants for home and terrace.