

## HOUSEPLANT CUTTINGS

Cuttings are a quick and satisfying way to increase your own indoor plant collection as well as providing welcome gifts. Cuttings are severed parent parts that produce roots and/or stems to form a new and independent plant. The propagation of cuttings is a simple and economical method to produce new houseplants.

### Equipment needed for rooting cuttings

- Container - many cuttings can be rooted in one shallow container to save space and medium.
- Rooting medium
  - Rooting Mediums: Use a mix of half perlite and half medium grade peat moss OR half vermiculite and half medium grade peat moss or coarse sand.
- A sharp knife
- A plastic bag
- A source of plant material
- Rooting Hormones: Cuttings will succeed without hormone treatment but these products speed up the process. **Be careful to treat only the tip of cutting.**



### General instructions for propagating houseplants:

- Water plants the day before taking cuttings. This will reduce stress and dehydration.
- Place containers of cuttings inside plastic bags and tie closed to retain moisture. Use supports to hold plastic up to keep it from touching cuttings.
- Place containers in a warm, brightly lit area. **Avoid** direct sun since the resulting trapped heat will damage cuttings.
- Check containers regularly to ensure that there is adequate moisture. Punch a few holes in the plastic if soil is too wet.
- Check for rooting by tugging gently on cuttings. When you feel resistance, cuttings are ready for transplant. Gently lift and plant into separate three-inch pots.

### Types of Cuttings

Stems, leaves, or roots may be used.

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e-mail your garden questions to: [mastergardener@spokanecounty.org](mailto:mastergardener@spokanecounty.org)

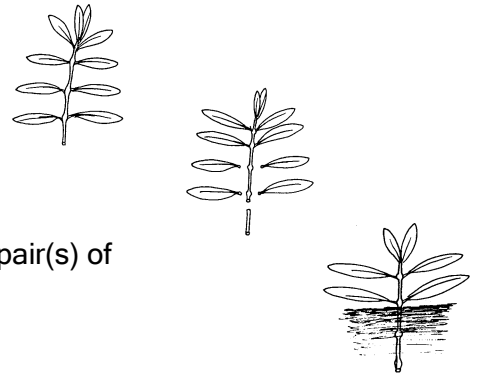
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## INSTRUCTIONS FOR SPECIFIC TYPES OF CUTTINGS:

### *Herbaceous stem cuttings*

#### ROOTING STEM CUTTINGS IN MEDIUM

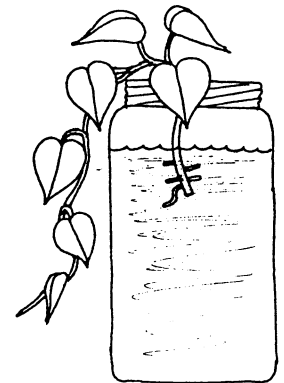
- Fill containers with rooting mix.
- Make small holes with your finger, pencil, etc.
- Take cuttings from newer fast-growing stems.
- Cut just below the third or fourth pair of leaves. Strip lower pair(s) of leaves, leaving two sets of leaves.
- Place bare stems in rooting medium.



Alternatively -

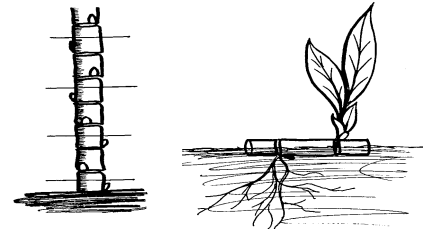
#### ROOTING STEM CUTTINGS IN WATER

- This is one of the most common and popular methods of propagating new plants.
- Use a glass or a jar of water. Place in bright, warm area.
- Use a clean, sharp blade. Remove healthy cuttings about four to six inches in length. Choose stems with only a short distance between nodes. Cut just above a node.
- Next, trim the cutting to just below a node. Remove lower leaves so that you have a length of bare stem at the base.
- Insert the cutting through wire mesh or some other support so that stem is suspended in the water.
- Keep water topped so that lower part of cutting is always below water surface.
- Roots should develop soon. When cuttings have a small network of roots, plant each in a three-inch container. If you allow cutting to produce an extensive root system, it may not transplant well or possibly not at all. See illustration.
- In general, any plant with a leafy stem will propagate in water. Some that do particularly well are coleus, geranium, ivy, peperomia and pothos.



### *Cane cuttings*

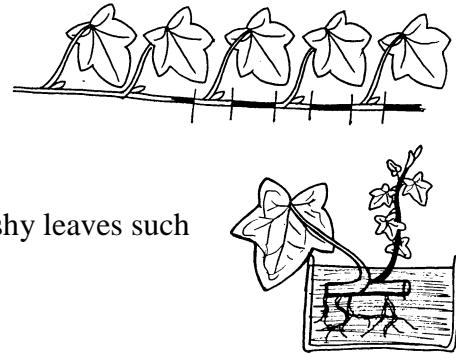
- Cut cane-like stems into sections containing one or two nodes.
- Dust ends with fungicide or activated charcoal; let dry for several hours. Lay the cutting horizontally with half of the cutting below the medium surface, node facing upward.
- When shoots and roots form, pot into three-inch pots.



### *Leaf cuttings*

#### Whole Leaves

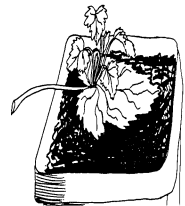
- Cut healthy, mature leaves from parent plant. Leave about one inch of leaf stalk (petiole) if possible.
- Insert stalk into soil so that leaf blades touch mix.
- This method works especially well with plants having fleshy leaves such as begonias, African violets and gloxinias.



#### Cut or Scored Leaves

Leaves with prominent veins such as those found on begonias and Cape primrose will produce new plants when they are scored or cut into pieces.

- Leaves or pieces of leaves are placed so that veins are in contact with rooting medium.
- When small plants develop, carefully lift, separate and pot them individually in 3-inch pots.



### Plantlets (Division)

Division is the easiest method of multiplying plants that naturally produce offsets or basal shoots. These new shoots usually have a few roots and can be separated and planted individually. Plantlets are "babies" on new plants that grow on the parent plant's leaves, stolons, stems or flowers.

- Detach small plants. Leave about one inch of stalk or stolon where appropriate.
- Insert stalk or base of plantlet so that plantlet rests on surface of rooting medium.
- Roots should form in a few weeks. Pot new plants in three-inch containers.
- Plantlets of spider plants can be rooted while still attached to main plant and then detached when roots have formed.



*Propagation Techniques for Selected Houseplants*

Plant	Herbaceous Cutting	Leaf Cutting	Stem Section	Division	Comments
African Violet		•		•	Cut petioles ½-inch long. Place potted leaf cuttings in plastic bag.
Arrowhead (Nephtytis)	•			•	Cuttings may be rooted in water.
Asparagus fern				•	Keep young divisions constantly moist.
Begonia	•	•			May be started from leaf sections placed on surface of rooting medium. Cleanliness important.
Christmas Cactus	•				Keep moist, but avoid overwatering during rooting.
Coleus	•				Root in water. Easiest of all.
Diffenbachia	•	•	•		Subject to rot during rooting. Do not overwater. Keep clean.
Dracaena	•		•		Stem sections relatively slow.
English Ivy	•				Easy to root. Sometimes slow starting.
Episcia	•	•			Related to African violet. Tip cuttings grow faster than leaf cuttings.
Ferns				•	Keep constantly moist after division.
Fuschia	•	•			Root Easily. Prefers a cool temperature after rooting.
Gardenia	•				Vigorous new shoots root most easily in midsummer.
Geranium	•				Keep foliage dry during rooting.
Gloxinia		•			May be grown from leaf cuttings.
Hibiscus	•				Rooting hormones speed root production. Give bright light.
Hydrangea	•				Tend to root best in spring or early summer.
Impatiens	•				Very easy. May be rooted in water.
Jade Plant	•	•			Keep fairly dry during rooting. Must have well-drained medium, e.g., coarse sand.
Kalancho	•	•			Use vegetative shoots, not flowering shoots for best rooting.
Maidenhair Fern				•	Keep divisions constantly moist.
Peperomia	•	•			Root easily. Avoid excess moisture during rooting.
Philodendron	•				May be rooted in water. Spring and early summer give quickest rooting.
Poinsettia	•				Propagate in late August for home. Cleanliness important.
Pothos	•				Will root in water. Spring and early summer propagation usually most successful.
Rubber Plant	•				Keep humidity high during rooting.
Schefflera	•				Needs high humidity and bright light. Slow rooting.
Snake Plant		•			Place leaf sections in same position they grew. Will not root upside down.
Spider Plant		•			Very easy to root runners. Pot directly in soil mixture.
Zebra Plant	•				Use nonflowering shoots. Give high humidity and good light.