

To Propagate...Or Not

Is that the question? Why do we do it? Why would we want to? How do we do it? Do you need special equipment? Is it a difficult process? These are a few of the questions that are commonly asked about this subject. Plant propagation includes a number of specific methods. It is done through cuttings, seeds, division, layering, and grafting. Not every plant can be propagated through each of these methods. Each plant has its own unique requirements for propagation, which may include several of the aforementioned.

First of all, plant propagation is really a natural process. Many plants growing in the wild propagate themselves by setting seed, which is dispersed by wind, birds, or animals. Still others spread naturally through underground stems or runners.

So why would we want to propagate? It can be as simple a reason as economics, since it is much more cost effective to collect seed or use plants already in our garden to make more, or something more esoteric as ensuring the continuation of plants in our world that might otherwise die out. However, one of the best answers might be that it is just great fun!

Most of us would agree that some of the most treasured plants in our gardens seem to be those given to us by friends or relatives as seeds, cuttings or seedlings. When we are in our garden it's as though we are among old friends and we can't help but think of the people who gave us the plant or a special occasion for which the plant was given to us.

Getting started is relatively simple but requires starting with easy processes and a lot of patience. The best tool you can get is a comprehensive book on propagation methods to use as a resource, since there are predetermined methods for each type of propagation and each type of plant to propagate. One of the most complete resource guides is *The American Horticultural Society Plant Propagation*, Editor in Chief, Alan Toogood. Of course you can also rely on the Internet for a wealth of information on the topic, by entering your search question into Google, or any other search engine. Try to propagate a plant just once and you are destined to be hooked!

References

Propagation Basics by Steven Bradley