

# Vegetative Propagation

Propagating your own plants can save, and even generate money. Growing new plants from pieces of a parent plant will give you plants that are genetically identical, that is, clones.



## Cuttings

Pieces of a plant stem are cut and placed the right way up in a striking mix. If possible, don't use pieces longer than 10cm or thicker than 1cm. The softer/greener the stem, the smaller the cutting. Always use healthy pieces of stem.

## Taking stem cuttings

Make a clean level cut through a node at the base of the cutting. Cut the top of the piece at an angle 1 cm above a node, or with a tip cutting, leave the tip of the stem intact. Carefully remove all leaves from the lower 3/5 of the cutting without stripping any bark. For large leaved plants, trim back and shorten the leaves that remain on the top of the cutting.

Fill a box or pot with striking mix and makes holes in it with a stick to a depth of about half the length of the cuttings. Slot the cuttings into the holes, press them in gently then water with a soft shower.

## Root Cuttings

Some plants can be grown from pieces of root placed in a cutting mix. Cut the pieces 5cm long. Bury them vertically in the striking mix, the right way up. To remember which way is up, cut the upper part of the root cutting flat and the lower part on an angle. If uncertain about which way is up, place them horizontally in the mix. Keep the mix damp. Take the cuttings at a time when the plant is dormant, for most plants this is during winter.

## Shade and moisture

Cuttings are more successful if they are kept as moist as is practical without stopping the circulation of air. You may install misters in the propagating area or loosely place a plastic bag over each pot. All cuttings should be placed out of the sun.

## Potting on

When the cuttings are growing new roots and/or leaves, remove them from the container of striking mix without damaging their roots, and put them in a pot with potting mix. Water immediately then regularly.

## Division

Plants that form large clumps at the crown may be dug up in winter, broken into smaller pieces and replanted. Some plants need to be lifted and divided regularly to keep them in good condition. Cut back most of the leaf and root growth before tearing the clump apart. Ensure that each new leaf has a leaf, or an "eye" from which a new leaf may grow, and a portion of roots.

## Layering

Sometimes, when a branch or stem lies on the ground, it will grow roots. Once a good root system is established, the branch may be cut from the main plant and relocated as a new plant. You can layer plants by pegging lower branches to the ground, covering them lightly with soil. A couple of longitudinal scratches on the underside of the branch should encourage root growth.