

# peration Propagation

*This feature is designed to give our members propagation ideas, both for personal gardening and to encourage the reproduction of extra plants that will be hardy – and perhaps even flowering – for the club's plant sale fundraiser in May.*

- **T**here's still time to separate or divide bulb, tuber and rhizome plants after they've died back. Replant those you want to keep, and pot up some for the sale.

- **B**ulbs can be sold next spring without being potted. Store them in mesh bags or old stockings so they get air.

- **C**olor is important to our customers, so make note of your plants' bloom colors when you label the bulbs you store or the divided plants you put in pots.

- **M**ilkweed and other native seeds can be planted outside now, so they have the winter to germinate for sprouting in spring.

- **A**s autumn advances, the cooler nights make it harder to root new cuttings outdoors. Even so, certain plants are appropriate to clip and root at this time. Walk around your garden and look for plants with new wood or shoots. Try propagating some, and see what happens.

- **H**ere is a quick summary of how to root cuttings:

1. Choose stems at least 6 inches long and exhibiting a lighter, "new-growth" shade of green.
2. In the morning, when plants contain more moisture, cut the stems off just below a leaf node. The cuttings should be at least 4 inches long and should contain at least one additional set of leaves above the selected leaf node.

3. Remove the flower or growing tip to direct plant energy to rooting. Strip off all but the top-most set of leaves, so each cutting has only two leaves left. Cut the two remaining leaves in half crosswise (not lengthwise).

4. Dip the end of each cutting in rooting hormone. This is preferable but not absolutely necessary. Liquid rooting hormone can be purchased at Orchard Nursery.

5. Clean and sanitize (with a 10% bleach solution) your 6-packs, tray with drainage holes, or other container(s).

6. Fill your container(s) with a wet medium, such as perlite or a moist potting soil mix. With a pencil or stick, punch holes and then gently stick in your cuttings.

7. To create a greenhouse effect, lightly cover the cuttings with a plastic bag or other clear protection. Make sure the cover does not touch the leaves and the medium remains moist.

8. Place the container(s) in a sheltered location out of direct sunlight. Check every few days to make sure the soil is still damp. In about 2 to 4 weeks, the cuttings should be rooted.

9. When the plants are a little larger and hardier, with about 1-inch roots, transplant them into 4-inch pots. Lightly fertilize, place in appropriate sunlight, and keep the plants watered.

**NOTE:** Some plants (hydrangea, grape, lavender) can take months to root, so don't give up on them too soon.