

Pleasant Hill Garden Study Club
Operation Propagation
Plant Propagation by Preparation and Sharing of Cuttings**

October 2008

1. If possible, take cuttings in the early morning when they are fresh and turgid.
2. Take cutting that are not too large, i.e. small enough to fit in a gallon Ziploc bag
3. Immediately wrap cuttings in a paper towel or newspaper and dampen it, then place cuttings in a plastic bag.
4. The two secrets to successful cuttings are to keep them cool and damp, so place the cuttings in the refrigerator or a cooler with some ice.
5. Cuttings can be successfully taken 4-5 days ahead if they are kept cool and damp.
6. Label the cuttings with the genus and species. If you don't know what they are, include a flower if possible for someone to identify it.
7. If you have lots of cutting material, be sure to bring many cuttings of a kind so that there are lots to share.
8. Once you have made your acquisition of cuttings, take them home and again refrigerate them.
9. If you don't have a greenhouse, you will need to devise an area where you can do cuttings. During the warm season, it should be in the shade, and have water near by. In cooler/cold season, you will have to keep it protected, warm (bottom heat preferred) and most likely provide additional artificial light because of the overcast and shorter days. Select a cutting tray – cat litter pan, Tupperware dishpan, plastic sweater tray – and punch holes in the bottom. Fill the tray with perlite and peat mix. I use 1/3 peat and 2/3 perlite. You can use vermiculite also if you choose or coarse sand.
10. Recut the bottom of the cutting with a sharp pair of shears. Make sure that they are bypass and not anvil type. Anvil type crushes the stems.
11. Dip in hormone if available. I use Dip-N-Grow, available at Orchard Nursery in Lafayette. Use low concentrations for softwood cuttings and medium for harder wood. (10 sec.)
12. With a knife or shears, cut a line into the tray medium to make a trench to place cuttings in. Place cuttings 1" apart. Firm the material around the cuttings.
13. Mist the cuttings at least 3 times a day for the first 4 days. After 4 days you can go to two times a day. Check cuttings frequently. After 1 week, check, by carefully digging them with a pencil. If they rooted, they can then be transferred to a pot with soil. Be sure not to damage or bend the roots.
14. If they haven't rooted, place them back in the tray and check in another week.
15. Lightly feed once transplanted to an appropriate soil mixture.

*****Originally drafted by and courtesy of Kathy Echols, DVC Horticulture Instructor.***

Any errors in retyping this are solely the responsibility of Steve Morse, PHGSC webmaster. For more detailed information on plant propagation, consider utilization of the WWW, or purchasing a reference book such as "Making More Plants: The Science, Art, and Joy of Propagation" by Ken Druse, which Kathy is using in her "Plant Propagation 160" class at DVC. [DVC Spring Semester enrollment opens soon](#). Class starts Thursday, January 15, 2009, 7-10 p.m, where you can learn all the various methods of propagating plants.

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