



Softwood Cuttings

When to take softwood cuttings

Most softwood cuttings are taken in spring and early summer, from the tender new growth of the season. If potted by mid summer they will develop sufficient roots to survive the winter, otherwise, pot-up in the following spring.

How to take softwood cuttings

Cuttings from young plants root more easily; heavy pruning older plants can stimulate new growth that will root quicker than the old growth.

Gathering cuttings material

- Collect material early in the day when it is full of water (turgid)
- Collect non-flowering shoots, - they root more readily
- Remove up to 10cm (4") of shoot, cutting off the material neatly above a bud on the parent plant
- Place the cuttings material in a clean plastic bag with a label. Store the bag of material in the fridge if you cannot prepare the cuttings immediately

Preparing nodal cuttings > >



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Nodal Cuttings

Most cuttings are nodal, i.e. cut at the bottom just below the leaf joint or node, where there is a concentration of hormones to stimulate root production.

- Using a sharp knife trim below a node to make a cutting about 5-10cm (2-4") long.
- Remove the lower leaves, pinch out the soft tip and dip the base of the cutting in hormone rooting powder or liquid.
- Make a hole for the cutting in a container of cutting compost using a dibber (a clean, blunt stick) and insert the base of the cutting.
- Label the pot and water it from above to settle the compost.
- Place the pot in a closed propagator case with bottom heat of 18-24 °C (64-75F). Covering with a clear plastic bag and placing somewhere warm will suffice if no other equipment is available, but remove the bag to ventilate the cutting at least twice a week for 10 minutes. Commercial nurseries use mist units to provide constant humidity.
- Cuttings should be placed in good light but not direct sunlight. Covering with fleece will help diffuse bright sunlight.
- Ensure the compost is moist until the cuttings are well rooted, which takes about 6 to 10 weeks.
- Once rooted, harden off the cuttings for about 2 weeks and pot them on individually. Covering with fleece or gradually increasing the ventilation of plastic bags or propagators will allow the soft leaves to develop a robust waterproof cuticle so that they can survive in lower humidity environments.
- Remove any dead, dying, diseased, or rotting material at least weekly.



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