

Growing Cuttings

When growing conditions are right, many plants are able to grow and produce a new plant from either a piece of stem, leaf or root.

- Taking a cutting from a plant is known as *vegetative reproduction*. To achieve success, take cuttings from new, soft, stems of healthy plants that are growing vigorously in spring and early summer. These 'softwood' cuttings can be taken from plants like Fuchsias, Geraniums and Hydrangea and are usually successful.
- Cuttings taken from 'semi-ripe' or 'mature' woody plants are taken in the autumn and generally overwintered in well drained open ground before they root next spring. These 'hardwood' cuttings, and some softwood cuttings from certain herbaceous plants, can be more difficult to propagate.
- Root and leaf cuttings can also be done but these are a bit more difficult and require experience and some skill to master.

Taking cuttings is a good and cheap way of producing new plants that will be identical to the parent stock (clones).

What do we need to start?

Work area with newspaper to prevent a mess

Sharp Knife

Multi-Purpose Compost

Pots and Trays

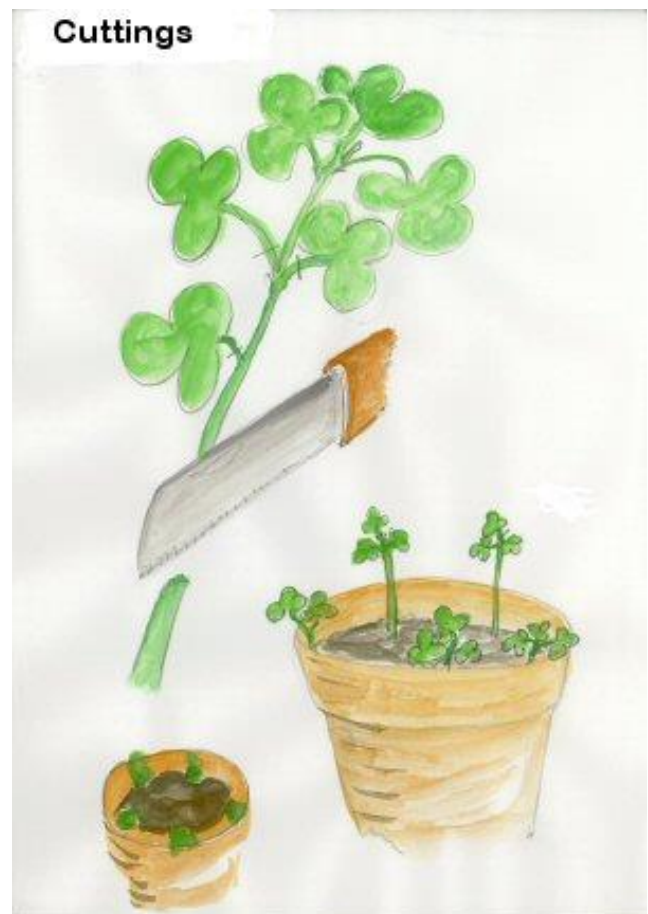
Polythene bags or Clingfilm

Elastic bands

Healthy plants to take cuttings from

Hormone rooting power (optional)

Labels and pen/pencil



Instructions:

1. Softwood cuttings can be taken whenever a plant is growing well. The warm weather of June and July is an ideal time when cuttings will root rapidly and establish.
2. Select a new shoot of 5 to 8 cm that does not have a flower and make a clean cut just below a leaf joint (node). Each cutting can be lightly dipped in hormone rooting powder to assist the rooting process, but this is not vital for good results.
3. Remove all but the top few leaves and place the cutting in the compost (use a pencil to make a hole) near the edge of a clean 8 to 12cm flowerpot that has been filled using either moist multipurpose compost or a 50/50 mixture of compost and sharp sand. Generally, 4 to 6 cuttings can be placed around the edge of the pot.
4. Place a polythene bag or cling-film over the pot and secure with an elastic band. Place each pot in a warm position away from direct sunlight. Don't over water or allow the compost to dry out.
5. Most cuttings will root within 21 days, but some may take slightly longer. Remove any cuttings that start to show signs of disease.
6. When the cuttings have rooted and are growing well, they can be pricked-out into small individual pots and treated the same as any tender young plant.

