

Baginton Gardeners

During our last meeting Geoff Hodge shared his vast knowledge on ways to get plants for free using his propagation tips, all of which and more are in his RHS Handbook: *Propagation Techniques: Simple techniques for 1000 garden plants*.

To increase the success rate of your cutting becoming healthy new plants, you need to follow a few basic rules

- All equipment needs to be very clean, (1 part bleach to 10 parts water, to sanitise).
- Knives or secateurs (bypass give a cleaner cut than Anvil) need to be sharp.
- Check the stems you are cutting are pest/diseases free, none flowering and have strong variegation on a variegated plant.
- Use deep cell trays or 9cm plots (5 cuttings per pot) to allow room for roots to grow.
- Cut cuttings just above a leaf node to protect the mother plant and reduce die back.
- Use a lighter, finer, low nutrient seed and cutting compost not multipurpose, or make your own using a 50% mix of Coir (coconut husks) compost and Vermiculite.
- Water your compost mix before filling your cell or pot. Take a handful of watered compost and squeeze it - too dry if it falls apart, too wet if water runs out. Perfect if dew seen and the handful stays in shape.
- Don't over compact the compost in the trays or pots, roots need room to grow.
- Take cuttings early in the day when the plant's stems are full of water and place them in a plastic bag to stop them drying out. Keep them in the fridge until ready to use them.
- Don't forget to label your cuttings.

Soft wood cutting - take cuttings in late March or April. Root in 2-3 weeks.

- Cut a fat or long stem to take your cutting 2"-4".
- Trim the cutting just below a leaf node, remove leaves from the lower half of the stem.
- Dip bottom end of cutting in hormone rooting powder. (HRP last longer when kept in fridge)
- Gently push stem into cell or pot until lower leaves contact the soil.
- Keep in propagator at 15-18 degrees until roots develop or a 2lt plastic bottle fitted over 9cm pot or plastic bag kept off the cutting by small canes works just as well.

Semi-ripe Cuttings - take cuttings in July to end of August. Root in 3-5 weeks

- As for soft wood cutting
- HRP is more important for these cuttings.
- No need to heat propagator. Use garden fleece to offer shade if very hot.

Hard wood cutting - take cutting in autumn when plants have dropped their leaves. Root in 6+ months

- Prepare a narrow outside trench in a sheltered spot.
- Put a layer of grit in the base, then backfill with soil mixed with compost.
- Choose a strong, thick woody shoot, grown in the current year.
- Cut it off close to the base then remove the tip of the shoot.
- Cut it into lengths 15-30 cm long.
- Cut just above a bud at the top of each length, using a sloping cut.
- Cut just below a bud at the bottom of each cutting, using a straight cut.
- Insert the lower two-thirds of the cuttings into the trench leaving one-third above the soil surface. Space cuttings 15cm apart in trenches.
- Leave the cuttings in the trench until the following autumn.
- Water in dry periods so that the compost doesn't dry out.
- Once the cuttings have rooted, they can be replanted in their final positions.

If you are buying an electrical propagator a thermostatically control one is best, but you will need to calibrate the temperature of it.

If you fancy a cutting from a plant not in your own garden ALWAYS ask the owner before helping yourself. 😊

Our last meeting for 2024 will be our Quiz night.

Meetings take place bi-monthly at the British Legion Club, Kimberley Road, Baginton @ 7:30pm. Everyone is always welcome so please spread the word, cost to non-members £4 per meeting.

For more information please contact

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