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## Propagation by Cuttings

Propagation by cutting is a highly efficient method of reproducing a plant that is an exact genetic replica. This method preserves unique and exceptional plants that have different or variable results when grown from seed.

Other means of propagation besides seeds, such as cuttings, are usually taken from mid-spring through mid-fall; however, with a heated propagator or heat mat they can be rooted earlier. If you have a parent plant that is showing signs of distress and you are concerned, it is worth taking a cutting - particularly if it is a rare species. The resulting plant will be identical to the parent plant.

Some cutting hints:

- One of the most popular types of cuttings is a tip cutting - the tip of the bud and a length of stem containing 2 or 3 nodes. Don't take too large of a cutting; the growing tip is going to root faster than hardened wood.
- Use a clean, sharp pruner or one-sided razor blade so that you avoid crushing the tissue.
- Rooting hormones can encourage rooting of difficult plants and increase the number of roots on others. (Follow manufacturer's label for suggested uses.)
- Use a free-draining medium such as lime-free coarse sand, or sand mixed with sterile mix. It should be moisture-retentive and free of disease, weeds and insects.
- Retain humidity - cuttings have no roots to take up water, but they lose it through their leaves. By covering them with humidity domes (or for taller cuttings the Extra Tall Dome) you prevent them from drying out until they can support themselves. Occasionally, provide ventilation by uncovering them for an hour or two.
- Using a cloning machine is a simple and highly effective process. The process involves continuously spraying a cloning solution (root growth stimulant) onto your stem, root or leaf cutting. Roots appear in 3 to 10 days, and your cutting is ready to transplant in 7 to 21 days, with a healthy, well-developed root system. When used indoors, results are better when the cuttings daily receive 16-18 hours of artificial light.
- Check plants often - remove any dead cuttings or fallen leaves.
- Don't over-water, but check for moisture more often if using heat. They will dry out faster.
- Keep your cuttings in a warm, bright spot, out of direct sunlight.
- Harden off once roots appear, by gradually introducing the newly formed plants to outside weather conditions. Charley's has an excellent selection of patio plant houses to protect them until they can tolerate cooler temperatures.

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*Charley's* Greenhouse & Garden

Questions? e-mail Charley's or Call 1-800-322-4707 24 hours, 7 Days A Week

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