



HARDWOOD PROPAGATION FROM CUTTINGS

Why Plant from Hardwood Cuttings?

- ✓ It is an easy introduction to plant propagation.
- ✓ Saves money and time!
- ✓ Saves natural resources – has lower-impact than buying a nursery product.
- ✓ It helps you gain a deeper connection to the plants in your garden. You will become more familiar with native plants and the individual plants in your yard.

Ideal Species for Hardwood Cuttings (from super easy to less easy)

- ✿ Any native Willow - *Salix lasiandra*, Pacific Willow; *Salix scouleriana*, Scoulers' Willow, *Salix sitchensis*, Sitka Willow; *Salix fluviatilis*, Columbia River Willow; *Salix hookeriana*, Hooker Willow
- ✿ Western or Douglas Spiraea - *Spiraea douglasii*
- ✿ Red-osier Dogwood - *Cornus stolonifera*
- ✿ Twinberry - *Lonicera involucrata*
- ✿ Salmonberry - *Rubus spectabilis*
- ✿ Ninebark - *Physocarpus capitatus*
- ✿ Snowberry - *Symphoricarpos albus* (in the right spot-can take tending in the first year)
- ✿ Indian Plum - *Oemleria cerasiformis* (more challenging from cuttings- about 50% success rate)

Choosing and Making the Cutting

Take cuttings in winter when the plant is dormant.

Cuttings should generally consist of the current or past season's growth. Avoid material with flower buds if possible. Remove any flowers and flower buds when preparing cuttings so the cutting's energy can be used in producing new roots rather than flowers. Take cuttings from healthy, disease-free plants, preferably from the upper part of the plant.

Avoid taking cuttings from plants that show symptoms of mineral nutrient deficiency. Conversely, plants that have been fertilized heavily, particularly with nitrogen, may not root well. The stock plant should not be under moisture stress. In general, cuttings taken from young plants root in higher percentages than cuttings taken from older, more mature plants. Cuttings from lateral shoots often root better than cuttings from terminal shoots.

Early morning is the best time to take cuttings, because the plant is fully turgid. It is important to keep the cuttings cool and moist until they are stuck. An ice chest or dark plastic bag with wet paper towels may be used to store cuttings. If there will be a delay in sticking cuttings, store them in a plastic bag in a refrigerator.

While terminal parts of the stem are best, a long shoot can be divided into several cuttings. Cuttings are generally 4 to 6 inches long. Use a sharp, thin-bladed pocketknife or sharp pruning shears. If necessary, sterilize the cutting tool in rubbing alcohol to prevent transmitting diseases.

Rooting Hormone

“Willow Water” is a homebrew plant rooting hormone that is easily made and can be used to increase the strike rate (growth of roots) of cuttings that you’re trying to propagate. The way that it works can be attributed to two substances that can be found within the *Salix* (Willow) species, namely, indolebutyric acid (IBA) and Salicylic acid (SA).

Rooting Medium (soil)

Choose a sterile rooting medium (soil) or make your own. The rooting medium should be low infertility, and well-drained to provide sufficient aeration. It should also retain enough moisture so that watering does not have to be done too frequently. Materials commonly used are coarse sand, a mixture of one part peat and one part perlite (by volume), or one part peat and one part sand (by volume). Vermiculite by itself is not recommended, because it compacts and tends to hold too much moisture. Media should be watered while being used.

Planting

Insert the cuttings one-third to one-half their length into the medium. Maintain the vertical orientation of the stem (do not insert the cuttings upside down). Make sure the buds are pointed up. Cover the cuttings with plastic and place in indirect light. Avoid direct sun. Keep the medium (soil) moist until the cuttings have rooted. Rooting will be improved if the cuttings are misted on a regular basis.