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Seedy Characters HPSO Study Group

Root Cuttings

What are root cuttings?

These are pieces of ROOT only - not to be confused with suckers, divisions, runners, etc. There is no top growth, crown, or visible leaf buds. They are potted up, and over time they will form both shoots and more roots.

When is the best time to take root cuttings?

Now! Late winter - plants are still dormant but are poised to begin new growth from energy reserves stored in roots.

How do I take root cuttings?

1 - Dig up the entire plant (perennials). Leave at least half of the roots intact if you wish to replant it.
2 - Carefully excavate a root or two (trees & shrubs).
3 - Dig around the crown and lift it out, leaving root sections to form plants in the ground.

Fleshy roots - pencil-thick - closer to the crown is better. Use young, vigorous roots - root prune in advance if it's an old plant.

Cut pieces about 2 in. long - straight cut at the top (closer to crown) and slanted cut at the bottom. Fungicide optional.

In container at least 3 in. deep, filled with well-drained soilless mix, use a dibble to make a hole and set cutting in it vertically, straight end up - even with surface or just below. Firm gently. Keep moist but never soggy.

<u>Thin, fibrous roots</u> - Cut pieces about 3 in. long - doesn't matter which end is up, because you will lay them in the mix horizontally. Cover with more mix. Keep moist but never soggy.

DO NOT USE ROOTING HORMONE

How long will it take to make new plants?
Probably months - process can be hastened using gentle bottom heat - 65 to 70°F. Don't be in a rush to pot them up - shoots often come first, with roots lagging behind.

What plants may be propagated via root cuttings?
Only certain ones - not all - see lists. Plants that sucker are more likely to be good candidates.

Keep in mind that VARIEGATED plants (like certain phlox) will revert to GREEN if propagated by root cuttings - they must be divided or propagated by stem cuttings.

Perennials

Acanthus - bear's breeches - 1-2 in. vert.
Achillea - yarrow - horiz.
Anchusa - alkanet - 2 in. vert.
Anemone hybrida - windflower - 2-4 in. horiz.
Armoracia rusticana - horseradish
Asclepias - milkweed
Brunnera - Siberian bugloss - 3 in. horiz.
Catananche caerulea - cupid's dart
Crambe cordifolia - giant sea kale - 2 in. vert.
Cynara scolymus - globe artichoke
Dodecatheon - shooting star
Echinacea - purple coneflower - 2-4 in. vert.
Echinops ritro - globe thistle
Erodium - stork's bill - 1-2 in. vert.
Eryngium - sea holly
Filipendula palmata - meadowsweet - horiz.

Gaillardia - blanket flower
Geranium - 1.5-2 in. vert.
Gypsophila paniculata - baby's breath
Hacquetia epipactis
Lamprocapnos - bleeding heart - 2 in. vert.
Limonium - sea lavender
Lindelofia
Macleaya cordata - plume poppy
Morina longifolia
Papaver orientale - Oriental poppy
Passiflora - passionflower
Pelargonium
Phlox paniculata 2-3 in. horiz.
Primula - primrose - 2 in. horiz.
Pulmonaria angustifolia - lungwort
Pulsatilla - Pasque flower - 1 in. vert. or horiz.
Rehmannia
Romneya - Matilija flower - 2-4 in. vert.
Scabiosa
Stokesia laevis - Stoke's aster
Symphytum - comfrey
Verbascum - mullein - 1-2 in. horiz.

Shrubs & Vines

Aesculus parviflora - bottlebrush buckeye
Aralia
Campsis - trumpet creeper
Caragana - pea shrub
Celastrus - bittersweet
Chaenomeles - flowering quince
Elaeagnus
Fothergilla?
Hippophae - sea buckthorn
Olearia - daisy bush
Rhus - sumac
Rosa - some roses?
Rubus - raspberries, blackberries, etc.
Sambucus - elderberry

Sorbaria
Stephanandra
Syringa - lilac
Tetrapanax - rice paper plant
Wisteria
Yucca gloriosa

Trees

Albizia - mimosa
Amelanchier - serviceberry
Asimina triloba - pawpaw
Catalpa
Cladrastis kentukea - yellowwood
Clerodendron - glory bower - 3 in. horiz.
Embothrium coccineum - Chilean fire bush
Gymnocladus dioicus - Kentucky coffeetree
Halesia - silverbell
Koelreuteria - golden raintree
Maackia
Maclura pomifera - Osage orange
Paulownia - empress tree - horiz.
Populus - poplar, aspen
Robinia - black locust
Sassafras albidum
Sorbus - mountain ash