

Taking Cuttings

Clone an existing plant to make more, for free

DIFFICULTY Easy-moderate

TYPE One-off technique per batch

TIME 15–30 min to take, weeks to root



DIFFICULTY
Easy-moderate



TIME
15–30 min



COST
Free



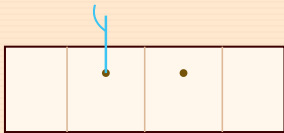
BEST SEASON
Spring or
autumn,
depending on
plant



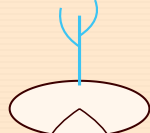
FREQUENCY
As needed

01 Rooting a cutting

Most soft or semi-hardwood cuttings root readily in a free-draining mix kept consistently moist — many herbs and shrubs can be propagated this way at essentially no cost.



seed tray, correct depth



growing on, or a rooted cutting

02 What you'll need

- A healthy parent plant
- Sharp, clean secateurs or scissors
- Small pots and free-draining potting mix
- Optional: rooting hormone powder or gel

03 Method

1. Take a 10–15cm cutting from healthy, non-flowering growth, cutting just below a leaf node.
2. Remove lower leaves, leaving just 2–3 sets at the top.
3. Dip the cut end in rooting hormone if using it.
4. Insert into moist, free-draining mix, firm gently, and water in.
5. Keep in a warm, bright but not direct-sun spot, and keep consistently moist until roots establish.

04 Troubleshooting

- **Cutting rots before rooting** — mix too wet or poorly drained; ease off watering, improve drainage.
- **Cutting wilts and dies** — too much direct sun or heat stress; move to a more sheltered spot.
- **No roots after several weeks** — try a fresh cutting, or check the plant is a suitable candidate for cutting propagation.
- **Mould on the cutting** — poor airflow; space cuttings out, reduce humidity slightly.

05 Timing & maintenance

BEST TIME	Spring for most soft-wood cuttings; autumn for many semi-hardwood shrubs.
DURATION	Roots typically establish in 3–8 weeks depending on the plant.
MAINTENANCE	Keep consistently moist; check for rot or mould regularly.
SIGNS OF SUCCESS	A gentle tug meets resistance, indicating roots have formed; new leaf growth is also a good sign.

06 Tips & variations

PAIRS WELL WITH

Grafting Basics

COMMON MISTAKES

Taking cuttings from flowering or stressed growth

Letting the mix dry out during the rooting period

PRO TIP

A clear plastic bag or bottle over the pot creates a mini greenhouse that dramatically improves success rates for tricky cuttings.