

How do I take cuttings?



Taking cuttings is a really enjoyable way of making more plants for next to nothing, all you need is some secateurs or a sharp knife, some free draining compost and some hormone rooting powder.

First choose the type of plant that you want to try and take cuttings from. Some plants will only root if the cuttings are taken from a certain stage of growth.

These types of cuttings are called:

- Soft wood cuttings; the growth put on this year before it begins to

turn at all woody. These cuttings are normally taken in mid spring.

- Semi-ripe cuttings; when the new growth from this year begins to firm up a little and turn slightly woody. These cuttings are normally taken in June or July.

- Hardwood cuttings; the growth on a woody plant that has become woody itself. These cuttings are normally taken in early autumn or in winter when the leaves have fallen.

- Basal cuttings: these are taken in mid spring from herbaceous plants that are just shooting up from the soil.

- Heel cuttings: these are normally taken from conifers etc.

Most types of vigorously growing plants and shrubs can be propagated by either soft wood or semi ripe cuttings, but some plants root better when hardwood cuttings are used.

Before taking any cuttings try and give the plant a good drink at least 1 hour before to make sure that it's cells are as full of water as possible.

So how do I take a cutting?

To take a **soft wood** cutting use a sharp pair of secateurs or a sharp garden knife

and cut a 10cm length of fresh green growth off the plant cutting just above a bud. Take the cutting and cut just below its lowest bud before stripping the lower leaves off. Make sure you leave at least one mature pair of leaves at the top and then dip the base of the cutting in to a little water before dipping it in to the hormone rooting powder, then place it in some well drained compost; dib a hole in the compost using a pencil before sliding the cutting in to the soil. Make sure you water the cutting in well and place it in a shaded and sheltered place, such as a shaded cold frame.

Then just make sure you keep the cuttings well watered whenever they become slightly dry. After six weeks the cuttings should be putting on new growth and looking green and healthy meaning they have grown roots. To check, tip the pot out gently in your hand and if the cuttings have loads of roots then separate them out in to individual pots and water them well. Once they are big enough you can plant them where you like.

To take a **semi-ripe** cutting use a sharp pair of secateurs or a sharp garden knife and cut a 15cm length of growth off the plant cutting just above a bud. Then take the cutting and cut just below its lowest bud before stripping the lower leaves off. Make sure you leave at least one mature pair of leaves at the top and then dip the base of the cutting in to a little water before dipping it in to the hormone

rooting powder, then place it in some well drained compost; dib a hole in the compost using a pencil or a dibber before sliding the cutting in to the soil. Make sure you water the cutting in well and place it in a shaded and sheltered place, such as a shaded cold frame.

Then just make sure you keep the cuttings well watered whenever they become slightly dry. After six to eight weeks the cuttings should be putting on new growth and looking green and healthy meaning they have grown roots. To check tip the pot out gently in your hand and if the cuttings have loads of roots then separate them out in to individual pots and water them well. When they are big enough you can plant them where you like.

To take a **hard wood** cutting use a sharp pair of secateurs or a sharp garden knife and cut a 20cm length of fresh, but woody growth off the plant cutting just above a bud. Then take the cutting and cut just below its lowest bud before stripping the lower leaves off, if it still has leaves on. Make sure you leave at least one mature pair of leaves at the top and then dip the base of the cutting in to a little water before dipping it in to the hormone rooting powder, then place it in some well drained compost and dib a hole in the compost using a pencil before sliding the cutting in to the soil. Make sure you water the cutting in well and place it in a shaded and sheltered place, such as a shaded cold frame.

Or ... for hard wood cuttings you can place the cuttings in a slit made in the ground using the blade of a spade and then firm them in by treading on the soil around the base of the cuttings. Make sure you water them and keep them watered during dry spells.

Often hardwood cuttings are left to root over winter and are then gently lifted from the ground using a garden fork once they have put on a couple of inches of new growth in the spring time.

How do I take basal cuttings?

In early spring the herbaceous perennials start to lift their green faces out of the soil and towards the sun. At this point basal cuttings can be taken.

Brush a little of the soil from around the new shoots, using your fingers. And then take a sharp knife and slice right at the bottom of the new shoot, where it connects to the parent plant. This little shoot then has a bit of root growing tissue at its base and as such when potted up it will rapidly grow roots and give you a new plant 99% guaranteed.

With these plants you have about 4 weeks from when the shoots start to break through the surface in which you can take basal cuttings easily.

How do I take heel cuttings?

Heel cuttings are normally taken from things like conifers and they can take between three months and two years to root.

Simply choose a piece of you conifer that is about 10 -15cm long and gently pull it back wards off the main stem, you should notice that it comes away with a small heel of woody growth from the main stem.

This heel should then be trimmed using scissors or secateurs so that it is not longer than 1cm. Then dip your cuttings in some rooting powder before placing three or four around the sides of a 7.5cm pot full of well drained compost. Water these in well and place in a sheltered spot.

Make sure you keep these cuttings well watered and don't let them dry out. After about three months check for roots growing out of the bottom of the pot, if there are none then just keep checking every month.

Once there are roots growing from the cuttings just gently separate the cuttings and pot up in to a larger sized container. Make sure you don't forget to water them.