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home & garden

How to propagate plants by cutting

Cuttings are leaves, stems, or roots cut from the stock plant. There are two types of cuttings, tip and cane; and three types of leaf cuttings, whole leaf, leaf sections and leaf - bud, say Michigan State University horticulturists.

Propagation by cuttings produces a great many plants from one plant.

Tip cuttings are suitable for propagating coleus, schefflera, geranium, fuchsia, Christmas cactus, poinsettia, philodendron, and other similar types.

Tip cuttings are cut just below a leaf and should be

three to five inches long. The more leaves left on the tip, the better. Remove any lower leaves before inserting the tip in the rooting medium.

Cane cuttings are used for propagating dumbcane, Chinese evergreen, dracaena, and similar plants with cane-like stems. Cut the cane three inches above the soil line and then cut it into pieces two to three inches long.

The circular rings, or leaf scars, contain dormant buds or eyes. Each piece should have two of these circular rings. Place the cuttings slightly below the surface of the rooting medium, making sure the eye is facing up.

The eye will eventually form a new stem, and the remaining stock plant will also sprout a new stem.

Whole leaf cuttings are leaves, with or without stalks. Insert the leaf base into the cutting medium just far enough to hold the leaf in place. If the leaf has a stalk, it should not be more than 1 1/2 inches long.

Leaf section cuttings are used to propagate Rex begonia and snake plants. The leaves are cut into pieces two to three inches long and inserted into the rooting medium right side up.

English ivy, pothos, grape ivy, geranium, philodendron, peperomia, hydrangea, and the like are propagated by leaf - bud cuttings. A leaf - bud cutting is a single leaf with a stem 1 to 2 1/2 inches long.

The material needed for rooting cuttings are the rooting medium, a container, rooting hormone, a sharp knife or scissors, a plastic bag and the cuttings. The containers should be at least three inches deep but not more than six.

The rooting medium can be either sand, sphagnum moss, peat moss, vermiculite, perlite or soil. It should be

moist, well-drained and sterile. Rooting hormones are optional.

A container without drainage holes is best.

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