



## Softwood cuttings:

### How to make new plants from summer flowering favourites

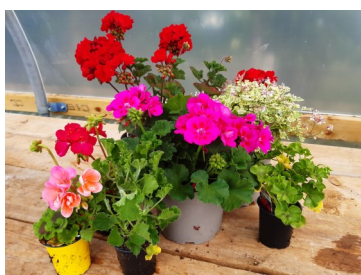
A wide range of deciduous shrubs e.g. sambucas, cistus, as well as hardy and tender perennials e.g. pelargoniums, can be propagated to make new plants. This is carried out in Spring and throughout Summer, when fresh growth can be taken from the parent plant. Taking softwood cuttings is a simple method to create new plants, especially from the popular summer bedding plants, such as scented geraniums, fuchsias, bacopas and verbenas, saving expensive year on year purchases.

What you will need:

- Cuttings material from parent plant
- Secateurs or sharp knife
- Good quality compost, labelled for 'cuttings and young plants'
- 9cm pots
- Pen/labels
- Watering can/bottle with fine spray
- Rooting hormone and plastic bags/small canes/twigs to create small greenhouse—several plant types may benefit from these additional simple measures



What you will need



Step 1 Pelargoniums

**Step 1** Choose plants to take cuttings material from.

Pelargoniums are a popular plant—some have highly scented foliage and most are highly floriferous!



Step 3

**Step 2** Choose healthy strong plants. Use sharp scissors to cut a 10cm length from the 'end' of a stem on the parent plant, just above a set of leaves.



Step 2

**Step 3** Take the 10cm lengths and trim them down to around 6-8cm, removing any lower sets of leaves, leaving 2-3 leaves at the tip.

Remove any flowers or buds that are developing.

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## Softwood cuttings

### How to ... continued



Step 4

**Step 4** Fill 9cm pots almost full with compost, tapping to settle any air pockets out of the compost.

Insert 3—4 stem cuttings into the compost, sliding them down the inside edge of the pot, leaving the leaves around 2cm above the compost surface. Firm the compost around the stems. Some plants e.g. penstemons, benefit from the cutting's stem being dipped into rooting hormone before inserting into the compost, and also covering the pot with a **mini greenhouse\***.

Water well with a fine rose spray on a watering can, or use a bottle top waterer. Label with plant name or plant description.

Place in a sheltered spot outdoors, and when temperatures start to cool off in early Autumn, overwinter in a light, frost free spot. Keep the compost damp, but never have it wet.



Step 5

**Step 5** Depending on conditions and time of year, the cuttings should start to develop roots in around 6—8 weeks. Fine thread like roots will start to appear out the drainage holes at the base of the pots. Remove the **mini greenhouse\*** once roots appear, if you have used one.

**Step 6** Carefully remove the root ball (compost with the newly developed roots) from the pot, and gently tear the individual stems apart.

Using good quality compost again, fill 9cm pots almost full, and using a pencil or dibber, 'wiggle' out a hole large enough to accommodate the individual stems. One stem per pot this time.

**Step 7** Overwintering: Keep these plants in a light, frost free place, ensuring compost is kept damp at all times.

As the plant develops, it will produce buds. Snip these off, to ensure the plant directs its energy to making a strong root system, stems and leaves.

**Step 8** When all risk of frost has passed (around May), the young plants should be strong enough that they can be planted outdoors to create a colourful display to welcome visitors, and of course, yourself to your door.

**\*Mini greenhouse** Some plants prefer a little more heat and moisture to stimulate root growth e.g. penstemons.

They benefit from a 'mini greenhouse' being constructed from a plastic bag supported over twigs, tied securely around the pot with an elastic band.

Ensure watering is always from a tray below the pots.



Step 6



Step 7



Step 8