

Plant Propagation by Stem Cuttings

Gardening is a very important past time for many people. This program is helpful with general knowledge/understanding of horticulture. The purpose is to build self-esteem, to stimulate the senses and to motivate participants. It can promote socialization, provide an age-appropriate, pleasurable experience, as well as provide an opportunity to nurture. The best stem cuttings come from plants such as Tradescantia (wildflowers), Geraniums, Coleus and Cape Primrose.

Ideal Group Size: 1:1 or small group

Equipment needed

- **Potting Trays:** 1 to 4 large
- **Cutting Trays:** 1 to 4 large cutting trays with clear plastic lids
- **Potting Soil:** one 28 litre bag of Pro-Mix
- **Vermiculite:** one small bag
- **Clippers:** 1 to 2 clean, sharp pairs of clippers
- **Plants to take cuttings from:** 2 to 3 healthy plants per participant, depending on size
- **Other:** Aprons, plastic table cloth, small plastic trowels, 2 large plastic trowels, 2 bins for mixing soil and vermiculite, watering can, plastic tags and permanent markers, face cloths for wiping hands

Instructions

Preparation:

1. Place table cloth, potting trays, shallow mixing bins, plastic trowels, watering can, soil and vermiculite, plastic tags, markers and face cloths on a table.
2. Place clippers in a safe place.
3. Place equal amounts of potting soil and vermiculite in mixing bins.
4. Add warm water and mix. Soil mixture should be moist, but not wet.
5. Give each participant an apron. Give assistance only where needed.
6. Give each participant some foaming hand sanitizer to wash hands.



Activity:

1. Let participant fill the cuttings trays with the soil mixture to a half-inch below rim.
2. Cut the stem of a healthy plant, at an angle, 4 inches in length.
3. Remove all flowers and buds to prevent energy expenditure and promote root growth.
4. Remove leaves from the lower 2 to 3 inches of the stem, leaving the top leaves to produce the food required for growth.
5. Let participant plant the cuttings in rows, 2 inches apart.
6. Let participant tamp the soil mixture firmly around each cutting.
7. Let participant write tags with name of plant and date.
8. Let participant insert tags into cutting trays.
9. Place clear plastic lids over the cutting tray. These can be set slightly ajar after 1 to 2 weeks. When cuttings grow too tall for the lids, remove lids altogether.
10. Place cutting trays in good light, preferably near an east-facing window.
11. Keep soil mixture moist, but not wet.

Clean-Up:

1. Dampen face cloths for participants to wipe their hands.
2. Ask participants to remove aprons. Give assistance only where needed.
3. Remove all items and wash all tools with soap and water.