

Plant Propagation

Date: July 3, 2021 *Updated: July 10, 2022*

Time: 7:00-8:45pm

Host: Teresa Gagné Participants: Grace Nombrado, Paola Coloma, Denis Gagné, Mya Lopez

1. Softwood vs. Hardwood cuttings

- Softwood is younger more flexible stems of plants
- Hardwood is older more woody stems of plants
- For our current purpose this season, we are looking for softwood cuttings

2. Technique for softwood cutting

Pre-Prep:

- *Materials needed: 1 Gal plastic pots, rooting hormone, bag of peat moss, sand, trowel (for mixing), hot water.*
- *In a large bucket, pour peat moss and moisten it with hot (boiling) water. Mix.*
- *Add an equal part of sand to make a 50/50 mixture of peat moss and sand. Mix thoroughly.*
- *Pour 50/50 soil mix into each 1 gal pot (to the brim of each pot)*

On the trail:

- It is best to take cuttings in the morning or the evenings (when it is cool).
- Find a softwood stem on a plant about 6" long
- Avoid taking from a plant that has many young/newly opening leaves
- Note that there should be about 3-4 nodes on the stem you will be cutting (nodes are where the leaves join the stem)
- Cut the base of the stem
- Collect the cuttings in a bucket with some water in to keep them from being stressed

Once you get home:

- Spray water from a hose into each pot to wet it the soil thoroughly
- Remove the leaves from the lowest two nodes of each cutting
- Dip in rooting solution or powder
- Tap off excess rooting solution
- Using a stick, poke down a hole in the soil of the pot
- Plant the softwood cutting in the 50/50 mix of peat and sand
- You can plant 2-3 small cuttings in a single pot

- If you don't have a greenhouse, cover the pot and plant with clear plastic bag (to retain the humidity and moisture)
- Place the plant outside in a cool, shady location until it roots well in the soil (you will know that the plant is rooting when you notice plant growth)
- Check frequently to water and maintain moisture in the soil
- In the fall, transplant the 2-3 cuttings out of the original pot and into each of their own pots – you can add potting soil or other soil at this time.

3. Native plants for softwood cuttings (taken in July 2021)

- Salal
- Ocean spray
- Honeysuckle
- Native trailing blackberry
- Thimbleberry
- Pacific ninebark

4. Native plants for softwood cuttings (updated: July 2022)

- Trailing blackberry
- Red huckleberry
- Mock orange
- Gooseberry
- Tall Oregon grape
- Bald hip rose
- Red flowering currant

5. Other propagation options:

From Seed

- July 2022, we experimented with gathering Red Columbine and Pacific bleeding heart seeds from flowers in the Douglas Fir Teaching Garden.
- We placed a folding paper under the flowers that had gone to seed, and pressed the seed pod to release the seeds into the folded paper.
- We then poured the seeds from the papers into an envelope
- At home the seeds will be spread on a paper towel on a plate to dry
- The seeds will be then stored in an envelope until the fall when they could be directly planted out on the trail
- In the fall of 2021, Free the Fern member, Damian, also experimented with collecting tall Oregon grape seeds from the mature berries. He removed the seeds from the berries and placed them in the fridge in damp paper towel. When they began to sprout, he planted the seeds in pots.

Hanging basket option

- Can use an old hanging basket pot to root softwood cuttings
- To keep humidity up, bury a pop can full of water into the center of the soil
- Cover with whole hanging basket with plastic
- the can of water will provide natural humidity

“Ground” layering propagation technique

- This is a technique for propagating from a living plant without removing a cutting
- If a plant has a low hanging branch (an oceanspray plant is an ideal one to try), you can dig a hole in the ground.
- Then you cut a notch near the end of the low-growing branch and plant it in the soil
- Use a piece of wire to peg/hold it into the ground
- Must provide frequent watering
- In approximately a year it should be well rooted and you can transplant the newly rooted branch to a different location.

“Air” layering propagation technique

- Make a notch in the stem of a plant (do not cut off the stem)
- Put wet moss wrapped in saran wrap and twist tie around the notched stem
- Make sure to monitor and keep moss wet
- This technique is good for doing in your own yard, but not practical for a trail area