



Top Tips

Root Cuttings

Check the Compost/Growing Medium You Are Using

For cuttings you need a medium that is heavy enough to support the roots with a low level of nutrients and very good drainage (make sure you include sand if it isn't already in your compost).

Check the Size of Your Pot

Make sure that the pot is large enough to allow for thick root cuttings to grow down after you have inserted your cuttings (9 – 13cm diameter is usually the minimum). If you are taking thin root cuttings you can use a seed tray.

Taking Root Cuttings

When?

Usually when the plant is dormant from November to February.

How?

Choose a healthy looking plant with vigorous growth and carefully dig it up, lifting the whole of the root ball. Trim back any top growth and shake off the soil. Wash the plant roots in a bucket of water. Select young roots near the crown of the plant and cut them off with sharp, clean secateurs. Return the plant to the soil.

Now trim off any thin lateral roots from a main root and make a right angled cut at the end where it was cut from the plant. Now work down the root cutting 4-8cm long cuttings with a sloping cut at their end. If your cuttings are about the thickness of a pencil you should insert them vertically into a pot with their top end just visible. Usually no more than 5 should be put a 13cm pot.

If your cuttings are thinner lay them on the surface of a pot or tray and then cover them with compost.

What then?

Water well and place in a sheltered area either in a greenhouse or cold frame. Try not to disturb them, but make sure they remain moist. Heat will encourage quicker root growth.

Potting on Cuttings

Depending on the heat, light and type of plant, root cuttings may be ready for potting on after three/four weeks. Check the bottom of the pot to see if new roots are coming through. If they are ready, carefully invert the pot and loosen all the cuttings. Then remove and repot them into their own pot, which should be about 8cm wider in diameter than the cutting's rootball. As the plants grow, repot until you are ready to plant them out into the soil.