Stem Cuttings – Soft Wood Cuttings

Day Before Taking Cuttings
- Water Stock plants
- Gather Supplies
- Sharp tool – razor blade, knife
- Root hormone, if used
- Rooting medium – bought potting soil or damp sand/perlite mix
- Container and clear plastic cover
- Labels and marking pen
- Mist bottle

Propagation day (usually Spring, early Summer or late Summer – before temperature drops to 40 degrees and plant begins dormancy.
Early in the day:
- Take container of water and tool to garden to gather cuttings
- Choose vigorous, non-blooming, half mature part of plant
- Cut between “nodes” and place cutting in water – label: date, plant
- Place in shade out of wind

In growing area
Shade provided for about 10 days
Gradually increase light after this amount of time
- Remove cutting from container of water, shake off excess water
- Dip 1 inch of stem in rooting hormone powder, tap gently to remove excess
- Use pencil or other clean instrument to make hole in damp rooting medium, insert cutting and press medium firmly around it.
- Place planted cutting and its pot in clear plastic tent and fasten top with “twistems”
- Place in shady location or under florescent light (12-hour days).
- Temperature of 75 degrees will hasten root formation.
- Mist about every half hour for first day or two.
- Most cuttings under ideal conditions will be well rooted in 2 to 3 weeks depending on season of the year (day length – short days of winter are not conducive to root formation).

Dormant Cuttings – fig, crape myrtle, grape – cuttings made in December.
Cur bare stems about 1/4 inch diameter and 12 inches long. Label growing tip – most important. In well-drained soil, bury bundle of cuttings horizontally about 6 inches deep. This will not likely freeze in winter.
In late March dig up bundle of cuttings, plant in good soil, being sure growing tip is up, and only 3 inches are above ground. Most of these cuttings will root and make top growth by May if kept watered. They should remain in this bed until March of the following year when they can be transplanted to permanent location.


Mary Lou McNabb, October 13, 2005