

Plant Propagation

Does a family member or friend have a beautiful plant and you would like to have in your landscape? If the answer is yes, then you don't have to spend a dime to buy it, just ask and you shall receive. You can increase the number of plants in your landscape by doing plant propagation. Plants can be propagated in two ways: one, by seed and two, vegetatively.

Seeds- if you are going to accept seeds from someone, or collecting seeds from your own plants, make sure that the seeds are not infested with diseases or insects and completely mature. Leave the fruit on the plant until they are dry, crisp, papery, or stiff. The best time to gather seeds is in the afternoon on a sunny, dry day, as wet seeds often mold in storage. Spread seeds on a paper to dry for one to two weeks. If you are not ready to plant, then store seeds in small dry bags, in a jar, or other airtight container. Store the container in a cool, dry place, such as in an interior closet.

Vegetative - The number of plants in a landscape can also be increased by using the vegetative parts of the plant such as stems, leaves, and roots. Vegetative propagation is done by removing and planting part of a plant and generating a complete replica. Also with vegetative propagation, a larger plant can be obtained in a shorter period of time.

A cutting can be any portion of the plant body. In most plants, the areas which contain growing points have to be included in the cutting. When taking the cutting, make a slanting smooth cut with a sharp knife or clippers. Remove any flower buds. The angled cut serves to increase the surface area of the cut. Wound the lower half-inch of stem on the opposite side of the last node. The scraping of the stem exposes the cambial layer underneath the bark to the rooting hormones. In addition, remove bottom leaves and/or cut bottom leaves in half to reduce loss of water from the leaves. Some leaves should be left, because they are source of internal hormones to help initiate roots. It is also important to note that rooting hormones are especially helpful when propagating woody plants. Woody cuttings will root more uniformly and sometimes faster when treated with rooting hormones. However, more does not necessarily mean better, so make sure that you use the recommended concentration. Also, shake off any excess powder from the cutting. Too much hormone has been shown to inhibit adventitious root formation. Place cuttings in a pot with soil mixture and keep moist in a cool place. New plants should start growing within three weeks.

For more information on landscaping and other related horticulture topics, contact Grantly Ricketts with UF/IFAS Extension in Osceola County at 321-697-3000 or email gricketts@ufl.edu.