

# Strike it rich



CUTTINGS ARE A BRILLIANT WAY TO FILL GAPS, SAVE MONEY, AND SHARE PLANTS WITH FRIENDS. FOLLOW PHIL DUDMAN'S EASY GUIDE TO GET STRONG ROOTS AND TRUE-TO-TYPE PLANTS EVERY TIME.

There's something very satisfying and slightly addictive about propagating plants from cuttings. With just a few snips of the secateurs and a handful of pots, one plant potentially becomes many. A few weeks later, when you spot those first roots forming, you're hooked, and suddenly everything in the garden looks like propagation material!

Taking cuttings is one of the most useful skills a gardener can master. It's an easy way to fill gaps in your garden and to share

your favourites with friends. And because plants grown from cuttings are genetically identical to the parent, they're true to type with the same flavour, flower colour, growth habit and reliability. It's economical and wonderfully empowering.

Two of the most dependable methods for home gardeners are hardwood and semi-hardwood cuttings. Once you understand the difference, the timing and technique make perfect sense, and with a few practical tips, your success rates will climb quickly.

**Top right:** Pencil-thick hardwood cuttings ready to plant.

**Bottom right:** Rooted semi-hardwood cuttings of lavender ready to pot on.

## UNDERSTANDING THE WOOD

**Hardwood cuttings** are typically taken from deciduous plants in winter when they are dormant and leafless. Think bare grape vines, fig branches or hydrangeas in midwinter. The wood used is mature, firm and fully developed from the previous growing season. These cuttings can channel stored energy into root production when spring warmth returns.

**Semi-hardwood cuttings** suit woody evergreen plants and are taken from partially matured new growth, usually from late summer to early autumn. The young stems are transitioning from green to brown, and the leaves are fully expanded to the tip. When bent, the stem snaps but not cleanly and it will be fibrous, not sappy. They are also called semi-ripe cuttings.



Many flowering plants such as hydrangea, catmint, lavender and salvia propagate easily from cuttings.

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