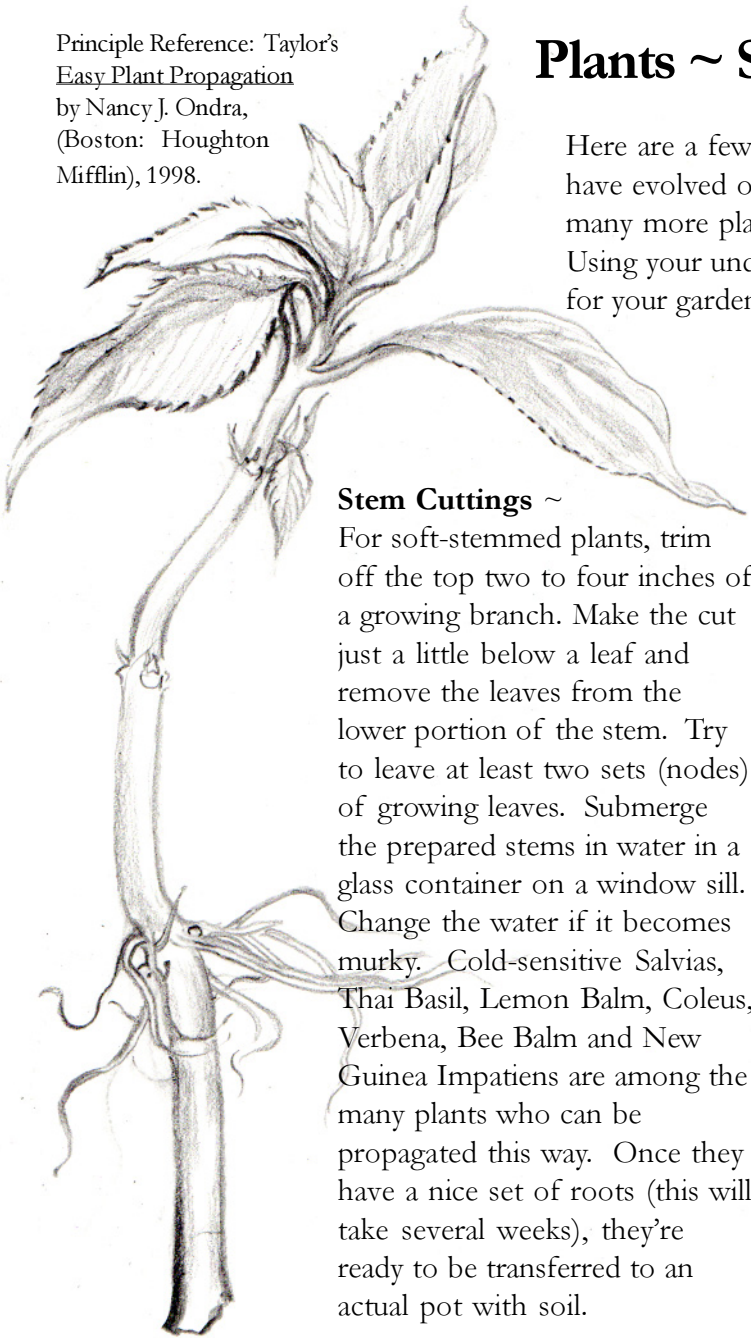


Principle Reference: Taylor's
Easy Plant Propagation
by Nancy J. Ondra,
(Boston: Houghton
Mifflin), 1998.

Plants ~ So Many Ways to Keep Growing!

Here are a few of the many “vegetative” kinds of reproduction that plants have evolved over millions of years. From just a little part of one plant, many more plants can be produced (all genetically identical to the first one). Using your understanding of how plants grow, try starting some new plants for your garden or windowsill - or to share with family and friends.

Happy Growing!

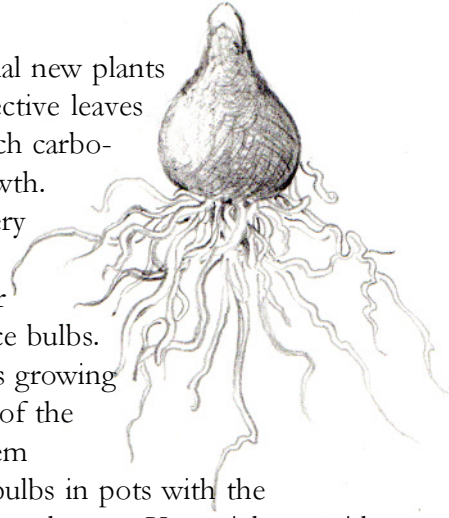


Stem Cuttings ~

For soft-stemmed plants, trim off the top two to four inches of a growing branch. Make the cut just a little below a leaf and remove the leaves from the lower portion of the stem. Try to leave at least two sets (nodes) of growing leaves. Submerge the prepared stems in water in a glass container on a window sill. Change the water if it becomes murky. Cold-sensitive Salvias, Thai Basil, Lemon Balm, Coleus, Verbena, Bee Balm and New Guinea Impatiens are among the many plants who can be propagated this way. Once they have a nice set of roots (this will take several weeks), they're ready to be transferred to an actual pot with soil.

Horizontal Stems ~ “**Runners**” are stems that grow horizontally out from the main plant, “running” flat along the ground. They feature small leaves and tiny tufts of roots at various intervals. Snip off these stems from the main plant and place them in pots with a light covering of soil. Keep these moist but not waterlogged as you wait for the roots to become better established. Mints and strawberries fare well with this treatment. **Underground storage stems (tubers)** such as potatoes (sweet or regular) can also be propagated easily - sometimes just in a water-filled bowl or glass jar!

Bulbs ~ These are potential new plants surrounded by thick, protective leaves that store lots of energy-rich carbohydrates to fuel future growth. Often they have thin, papery outer coverings. Daffodils and onions are two familiar types of plants that produce bulbs. You can find the new bulbs growing next to the base and roots of the original plant. To grow them independently, place your bulbs in pots with the appropriate amount of soil and water. You might consider purchasing paperwhite or amaryllis bulbs to grow indoors for beautiful flowers during the winter.



Root Cuttings ~ These can be useful for certain kinds of plants. For example, for Purple Coneflowers, gently dig down around the outer edges of the plant's central area and locate a root extending horizontally that is about the width of a pencil. With the help of a grownup, use a sharp knife to make a cut straight down to separate this side root from the central one. Remove the side root and cut it into 2 to 3 inch sections. The part of each section that was growing closest to the plant's central area will be the “top.” Fill small pots with potting soil and use a pencil to make vertical holes in this mixture. Carefully drop the cuttings “top” side up into the holes. Lightly cover the tops with soil and water regularly. With a bit of luck, green shoots will appear in a few weeks as stems and leaves sprout from the living roots.



Edith Pucci Couchman © 2012

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