



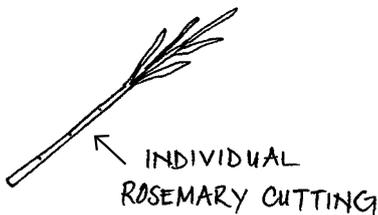
# Propagation: Softwood Cuttings

Taking cuttings of existing plants is a great way to grow new plants for free. It just takes time and a little patience until they root, but the actual process of taking cuttings is really very easy.

There are two 'types' of cuttings – hardwood cuttings and softwood cuttings. These are taken from either the hard or older wood of shrubs (it looks brown), or the very soft tips. You need to know what type of cutting is best for the plant you want to propagate. Spring is a good time for softwood cuttings, but some plants, like lavender or rosemary (soft or semi-hardwood cuttings), might be taken in autumn also, after flowering.

## Equipment:

- Secateurs
- Pots filled with seed-raising mix
- Organic rooting powder, manuka honey or raw honey
- Clear plastic bags and rubber bands



## What to do:

1. Choose new growth, with no flowers and no side shoots.
2. Using the secateurs, take a cutting about 8 cm long with just a portion of the hardwood at the base.
3. Using your fingers, strip all the leaves from the lower two-thirds of the stem.
4. Cut the remaining leaves in half with the secateurs, to minimise transpiration.
5. Dip the cut end in rooting hormone or manuka honey (raw honey will also work). This step is optional.
6. Slide the cutting into the pot at the edge – the pot can take more than one cutting.
7. Dampen the soil lightly. Place a plastic bag over each pot to increase the humidity around the cuttings, and secure with a rubber band around the pot. Remember to regularly mist the cuttings with a spray. Ensure that the bag does not rest on the cuttings. (If it does, take some thin wire – coathanger size is perfect – and cut it into 40 cm lengths, fold in half, insert the upside-down U into the soil firmly at the edges, then place the bag over this frame.)
8. It is time to repot the cuttings when they have approximately doubled in size. Tip them out and gently shake off the soil – do not pull them straight out of the soil as it strips the very fine root hairs away. They could take up to three months to root so be patient.

