

Gardening Know How: Taking Successful Cuttings

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It's been a difficult season for gardeners this year with a cold spring, a distinct lack of rain and scorching weather through the summer. However now is the time to start thinking about your plants for summer 2026.

August into early September is a great time to take cuttings of some of your favourite plants including *Pelargonium*, *Verbena*, *Fuchsia*, *Penstemon* and other perennials that are tender or need protection over winter months as young plants.

Ideally water the plants the evening before and then plan to take the cuttings as early as possible the next day – this ensures the cutting contains as much water as possible and haven't warmed up yet. Simply collect stems from the plant that are not in flower, this young non flowering growth has lots of natural plant hormones to help the cutting establish a root system, place into a plastic bag and keep cool.

Cutting compost is ideal, but should be free draining, fill a small pot or tray and gently firm. For most cuttings a nodal tip is ideal, a cutting with a growing tip and 3 to 4 leaves. Make a cut just below the 4th / 5th leaf – this is known as the node. If taking cuttings from a plant with smaller leaves you may need more leaves aiming for a 5 – 7cm cutting. Remove the lower leaves leaving 1/3rd bare stem and 2/3rd leafy growth. Insert these cuttings into the container without burying leaves. Water well but gently and place under a propagator lid or add a loose plastic bag over the pot. Hopefully the cutting will root in a matter of a couple of weeks but remember to keep moist and remove the bag once a day for a few minutes. Good luck!

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