

Rooting Cuttings Naturally

When gardening, it is sometimes most convenient not to start a plant from seed but to start it from a cutting from another plant. Most of the time, the science of starting cuttings involves the use of root growth hormones and other chemicals which can prove hard to get in some regions of the world and sometimes are not desirable because of their conflicts with some organic food regulations.

Luckily, there are ways to root and get cuttings up to a good start without the use of any root hormones. In order for us to do this, we should first understand the problem and how to solve it.

When a part of a plant is cut, and this part has no root system, the ability of the cutting to get nutrients from its surroundings becomes minimal. The idea is to maintain the plant's food requirements as low as possible until it develops a healthy root system that can take up nutrients and grow a healthy new plant.

The first step is to place the cutting inside some growing media (remember to cover the cut wound with candle wax in order to prevent possible fungal infections) (either potting soil in soil gardening or perlite, rice husk/ sand in hydroponic gardening) and to place it somewhere where light is scarce. When diminishing the amount of light that reaches the cutting, we slow down photosynthetic processes and therefore the nutrient needs of the plant. The media should be watered daily so that the new root system can be developed.

In order to supply nutrients for the plant, a suitable foliar spray should be applied. A 1/10 strength Hoagland's solution can be used effectively or a suitable organic foliar spray can be used if the desire to achieve organic food certifications is present. Plants are able to feed through their leaves in some way so the application of nutrients on the leaves or "foliar feeding" is a good technique when starting cuttings whose root

systems have not developed.

After 3 or 4 days of this process, the plant should be ready for it's reintroduction into normal growing conditions. If you are a hydroponic gardener, start applying a one third strength hydroponic solution on the plant's growing media. In any case, the plant should be brought into light in increasing intervals, first day one hour, second day 2 hours, third day 4 hours, fourth day 8 hours and fifth day left outside.

This whole process should provide an adequate environment and growth for the new cutting's root system with the final gradual adaptation providing enough time for the leaves to readjust to normal lighting conditions. I hope this guide proves useful and all of you enjoy new cutting in your organic or hydroponic gardens.

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