

ROOTING DAPHNES FROM CUTTINGS

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For this purpose I have split Daphnes into three groups:

Group 1. In this group I include the following species — *Daphne collina*, *D. x hybrida*, *D. odora* and its varieties, *D. retusa*, and *D. tangutica*.

The time for taking these cuttings is late July to the end of August but the all-important factor lies in taking them when they have reached the right degree of maturity. The cuttings should be of current season's growth. The length of cuttings should not be more than 3-inches but can be smaller according to the growth of respective species; cuttings may be a *joint* or a *heel* as long as the cutting taken does not exceed 3 inches. With *joint* cuttings it is a good tip to split them about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch at the base across the bud. This helps to form a good callus.

The cuttings are inserted into a mixture of 2-parts sharp sand and 1-part Irish peat moss. Pans or cutting trays may be used, with coarse chippings for drainage. After filling the tray with the cutting mixture, $\frac{1}{4}$ in. layer of sand is put on the surface. This, I find, prevents moss growing and a little sand trickles down to the base of the cutting when dibbled, which helps to form a good callus. Watering-in the cuttings is most important and must be very thorough.

Having completed this part of the operation, place the cuttings in a closed propagating frame with a temperature of around 50° - 60°F; shade fairly heavily and avoid over-watering until rooting takes place but, on the other hand, they must never be allowed to dry out.

All these species and varieties should be rooted and ready for potting off in about 6 or 7 weeks. Of course cuttings may be made the same way and rooted under mist, but I find with some of these varieties one does get quite a bit of "damping off".

Group 2. For Group 2 I have included *Daphne cneorum* and *Daphne* 'Somerset' (*D. x burkwoodii*). Let's start with *Daphne* 'Somerset'. This I find is the most easy to root of all the daphnes. One should have good stock plants, well established in 6 or 8-inch pots in the greenhouse, cutting fairly hard in the early spring to induce nice young healthy growth for the cuttings.

When this young growth is about two inches long and firming at the base this is the time to start taking the cuttings, which should be any time from June to early August. The treatment and mixture is the same as for cuttings in the previous group.

Stock plants of *Daphne cneorum* are best grown in the open ground, taking semi-mature cuttings 2 - 2½ inches long with, or without, a heel in late June or July. For this species

cuttings seem to do much better if dibbled in a cold frame with double glazing, using a rooting mixture of 2 parts sand and 1 part peat moss. The cuttings should be dibbled fairly close together as this prevents drying out. Cuttings should be given a really good watering-in, which should last until they are rooted provided that the frames are shaded on bright days. Rooting should take place in about 6 to 8 weeks after which they should gradually be given air and more light. I like to leave the cuttings in the frame to grow on until the following spring before potting off or planting out into the beds in the open nursery.

Group 3 — Daphnes from root cuttings in December. For this group I recommend — *Daphne genkwa*, *D. mezereum* 'Grandiflora', and *D. mezereum* 'Plena'. This method provides the most satisfactory way of increasing *Daphne genkwa*.

Stock plants should be grown in pots plunged in the open ground during the summer and taken into a cold frame or cool greenhouse for the winter. For this type of propagation it is wise to have good stock plants growing on in succession for each year. It is better to strip all the roots possible from the plants being used to get the cuttings. Having collected the roots, cut them into 1/2-inch lengths, and place singly in large thumb pots or similar sized plastic pots. Fill the pots 2/3 full with compost of 2 parts peat, 1 part sand, and 1 part loam then lay the cuttings horizontally and just cover with silver sand; fill the pots with the compost and firm lightly. Plunge the pots up to the rims in ashes or grit in an open propagating bench, water in and cover with white paper. When rooting has taken place move the plants to a cool greenhouse.

PROBLEMS IN NORWAY MAPLE AND SYCAMORE-MAPLE PROPAGATION

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I suppose that it must be the variation in leaf color that attracts me and many others to the *Acer platanoides* and *A. pseudoplatanus* varieties. Nothing is more satisfying than a good stand of 'Goldsworth Purple' contrasting with 'Drummondii' or 'Worleei' and of course there is no difficulty in selling them.

In common with many other growers, we have experienced great difficulty in obtaining a crop of these plants from buds. I can claim nothing original in the method now adopted which over the last few years has given us excellent crops. It is based on a study of successful growers' methods and of the growth pattern of the *Acer* species in question.

Our first requirement is a young rootstock with a fibrous root system. A two-year transplanted seedling, 8 - 10 mm size