

A New Propagation Guide for United Kingdom Nurseries®

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The Horticultural Development Company (HDC), the U.K. industry-levy-funded R&D provider, has been working on a project (HNS 183) which will result in a new comprehensive guide to propagation techniques which will be available free of charge to all HDC levy-paying nurseries.

The principal aim of the project is to critically review and collate key nursery stock research findings into a single publication which meets the needs of today's propagator. The guide, which is due for publication in 2012, draws on a considerable "back catalogue" of information and covers such key areas as stock-plant management, rooting media, post-rooting nutrition, rooting hormones, and propagation environments. Also covered are soft cuttings, hardwood cuttings, bench grafting, and propagation by chip budding.

A lot of useful information on propagation is tucked away in research papers and although widely dispersed still remains unused. Much of it is difficult — not to say time consuming — for busy growers to access but could usefully be applied to current day commercial practice to improve propagation performance. *IPPS Proceedings* and numerous research reports, notably those reflecting the pioneering work of, e.g., Dr. Brian Howard at East Malling and the late Margaret Scott of the former Efford Experimental Horticulture Station form significant points of reference. So too do the late Bruce Macdonald's iconic publication *Practical Woody Plant Propagation for Nursery Growers* and Lamb, Kelly, and Bowbricks seminal *Nursery Stock Manual*.

The project was conceived against this backdrop and has a broad coalition of industry support. All interested parties (which includes the Horticultural Trades Association and IPPS GB&I Region) agreed that the guide should bring together and harness current best practice and commercial knowledge with findings drawn from past and current research and development programmes. It should also be usable and accessible for training purposes. In many ways, it very much reflects the "Seek and Share" philosophy of IPPS.

This is a 2-year project, funded by the HDC and is being led by Andrew Hewson and David Talbot of ADAS. It is being guided by many industry leaders through a project steering group, some of whom will feature in the publication as case studies to show how research can be translated into successful nursery practice. The identification of current and future research priorities also forms an integral part of this project.

The first draft and case studies have been developed during 2011 and the final version is expected to be published in 2012.