


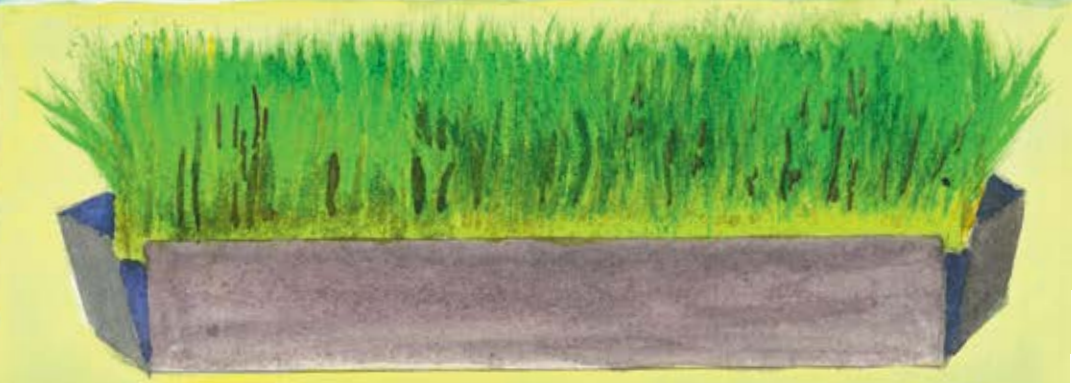


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Helpful books and websites

Templates for activities given in the book



*Our goal is to help you create a different mindset about gardening.*

In much the same way that your home can be a designer showcase of furnishings with no connection to the folks living with them, or—probably more to the point for many of us—an unedited collection of the stuff that has come your way to which you also may have no soul connection, your garden can also be on the deliberate end or the random end of the spectrum. Instead, grow the plants that really mean something to you. Grow the plants that bring you to one of the happy places or times or relationships in your life. In this way, your garden will become as individual as you are.

But we don't just want you to be inspired, we want you to be equipped with the basics of making more plants from plants, and so the stories in each chapter are supplemented by simple plant propagation how-tos.

There is a tremendous sense of accomplishment that comes from propagating plants, and a sense of preciousness that comes from propagating plants that tell part of your life story. We created this book to inspire you to find the botanical connections in your own stories, and to give you the skills you need to propagate those plants in a spirit of can-do-ism. Is it exhaustive on the details of every plant you might encounter? No. That's what Wikipedia and YouTube are for. But it will teach you what you need to know to not be afraid to try (and succeed) with a wide variety of common plants that grow all over the United States and Canada. And it gives firsthand accounts of why preserving family heirloom botanicals matters, or how to cultivate new ones.



*Each chapter includes:*

**Inspiration** *Stories from our memories to help prompt your own and inspire you to know where to look in your own life story.*

**Skill instruction** *A how-to guide to the basics of ten different simple, doable propagation techniques.*

**Guidance** *Most plants can be propagated by more than one method, so how do you know which method to use? For each propagation technique, we give you easy guidelines to help you decide.*

**A plant list** *Some other common plants for which this technique will work.*

**Projects and, well, tangents** *Interesting facts, recipes, gifts to make, and other ways to use the plants you've propagated.*

Want an especially easy project to get your feet wet with this concept? Turn to Water Rooting, page 17, and try pussy willows, geranium, or mint. Find your plant material needing to travel a bit? Turn to Leaf Cuttings, page 53; it's possible your intended plants might be able to grow from a leaf or two tucked into a ziplock, mailed in an envelope from point A and propagated on a windowsill at point B. Interested in including a packet of seeds from Great-Aunt Rita's place on Lake Michigan, along with a cool photo of Chicago you're gifting someone dear to you? Turn to Simple Seed Saving, page 105, to learn how easy it is to save seeds from flowering perennials you love, and for the link to a free printable seed envelope we made for you to keep it simple. In Planting Pups, page 39, you'll find a blueprint for a baby shower that includes a sweet and silly planting activity.

## How

### ONE

*For soil-growing pups, prepare your pots. Most pup-producing plants need or prefer a light, well-draining soil, such as one made from perlite, bark, and potting soil. A mix of potting soil and sand is, for many plants, enough.*

### TWO

*When the pup has grown to be at least one-third the size of the parent plant, it is ready to be detached and planted. With your hands, a pair of scissors, or pruners, separate the pup from the parent plant, snipping the runners or snapping off the pup. For air plants, gently twist downward at the base of the plant. Very few species require more strength than you can reasonably deliver with your fingers. If you're propagating an air plant, you're done!*

### THREE

*Pop the pup in the soil up to the base of the leaves, and give it a good watering (although aloes like to sit in dry soil for a week). That's really it!*

## When

The longer pups are attached to their parent plant, the faster they will grow to maturity. However, in the case of bromeliads, the faster you remove pups, the more pups the parent plant is likely to produce before it dies. If a pup has its own roots, it's a good sign it's ready to pot up on its own, but often they don't and will still transplant just fine.

## Why

For most of these plants, this is either the easiest or the only way to guarantee a viable reproduction, so it may just be your only option.

## Who

Air plants, aloes, bromeliads, hens and chicks (including sempervivums, jovibarba, and echeveria), sago palms, and more.

## Difficulty

Easy.

## Glossary

**bract:** The leaflike structure usually found at the base of a plant's flower.

**bromeliad:** A family of tropical and subtropical plants related to pineapples. Many species grow on trees and take in water through air roots. The largest one, commonly called (in English) queen of the Andes, can grow to 10 feet, and produce a flower spike up to 32 feet tall. It only flowers and produces seeds about every forty years, and is considered an endangered species. The smallest bromeliad is Spanish moss. Air plants are bromeliads.

