

Canadian Geranium & Pelargonium Society

The society meets on the first Sunday of each month (except January) in the Cedar Room at the VanDusen Botanical Gardens at 5251 Oak Street, Vancouver, BC

Doors open at 12:30 pm and meetings start at 1pm.

Meetings are a great place to learn more about the great variety of geraniums and pelargoniums, as well as an enjoyable afternoon of socializing with people of similar interests.

See our website (www.cdngeraniums.com) for information regarding upcoming meetings.



CANADIAN GERANIUM &
PELARGONIUM SOCIETY

Meets at: VanDusen Botanical Gardens
Cedar Room
5251 Oak Street, Vancouver

Information: 604-985-4676
Website: www.cdngeraniums.com
Email: info@cdngeraniums.com

Success with Cuttings

How to propagate your Pelargoniums



Website: www.cdngeraniums.com

Success with cuttings

Many growers report difficulties carrying their pelargoniums over the winter, whether these are Zonals (bedding 'geraniums'), ivy-leaves or regals. The plants are killed outright by mild freezing. The ideal conditions for their winter growth would be in a sunny, well ventilated greenhouse with minimum temperatures around 7°C (45°F). The most workable solution is to take a few cuttings in August, when they will root with good success, and leave the old plants outdoors to bloom until frosts kill them, often as late as December. Removing a few cuttings in August will not detract from the display, they should root readily and if any problems develop, there is still time to take more cuttings in September.

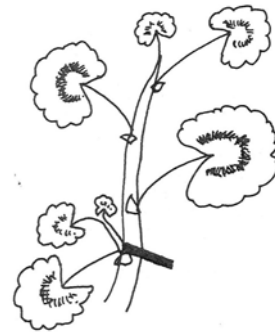
After pinching out the tiny top bud to promote branching, the rooted cuttings are potted individually into 3" or 4" pots and left in light shade on a porch or windowsill to establish. They are brought indoors as the weather turns wetter and colder. In our very poor winter light, plants can only make weak growth so they should be encouraged to rest by keeping them on the dry side, watering from once a week to once a month depending on the size of the plants, the pots and the temperature. A few plants may be managed on a sheltered patio if they are protected from wind and rain, and brought in at the threat of frost. This is perhaps the best way to handle any large plants you may wish to carry over.

By March, growth should resume with the plants being fed balanced fertilizer as they begin to grow. Those requiring it should be potted on. Any leggy growth should be cut back at this time. With more sunshine growth will quicken and flower buds will appear. If plants are to return outdoors, they should be hardened off by moving them to

cooler and sunnier conditions, either to a partially shaded spot outdoors during the daylight hours or to an unheated sun porch or cold frame. As May can bring cold, wet weather, we do not recommend planting outdoors until the May long weekend.

In taking the original cuttings, remember the space available for the plants by late spring, when they should be quite large, and avoid the temptation to start too many. Overcrowding leads to poorly developed plants susceptible to pests and diseases.

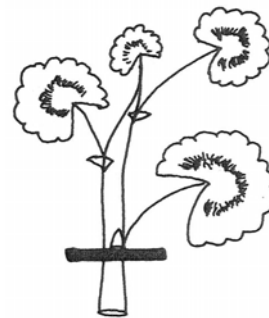
Cuttings taken when the weather is warm will usually give a high success rate provided some simple precautions are taken. Select vigorous, maturing stems, not the very strongest arising from the base of the plant, but ones slightly higher and often showing a slight pink tinge to the green of the stem.



Cut with a clean, sharp blade, a piece with three or four sections of the stem, making a cut just above the leaf so as to leave no stump to die on the donor plant. Like surgery on people, results are best if everything is clean and as close to sterile as possible.

The cutting is stripped of all but a couple of unexpanded leaves and of the stipules that flank them and

trimmed cleanly just below the lowest joint to leave it two or three sections long. For maximum success each cutting is completely immersed in a suitable antiseptic. (We usually use 'No Damp', a proprietary treatment against damping off of seedlings, diluted as directed. 'No Damp' contains 8-



hydroxyquinolinium benzoate.) Excess liquid is shaken off and the cut end only is touched into rooting compound. Zonal pelargoniums are quite sensitive to these compounds and an overdose will kill the cutting. For this reason we prefer brand such as Seradix B that comes in three strengths, using the weakest one, designated for soft wood. One-strength brands may be diluted two to four times by mixing with talcum powder.

Pots for cuttings should be clean and rinsed after a soak in disinfectant, either a household variety or diluted bleach. (Clay pots will require extensive soaking to remove the disinfectant.) They are then filled with non-infected, porous medium.

This may consist of clean peat mixed with an equal volume of perlite, vermiculite, pumice or sand.

The cuttings are inserted into holes in the medium, far enough apart so as not to touch one another, and gently firmed in. When the pot is full, it is

watered with diluted 'No Damp' and allowed to drain. It is then set in a reasonably warm position out of direct sunlight.

Under these conditions zonal pelargonium cuttings should root within 10 to 14 days and should require no further watering during this time. The cuttings will rot if overwatered. The leaves should also not be sprayed. It does no great harm if the cuttings are carefully lifted to examine them during

