

ROOTING IN WATER

Glenda Ostick

I love propagating...all ways - seeds, cuttings, division - any way. But the most intriguing to me is when a bit of something 'drops off', preferably with a heel or a node, and it is put in water.

One day last summer, I wandered round the garden wondering how many plants I could get to do just that. I ended up with greenhouse staging covered with clear plastic beakers full of anything I thought might put roots out in water. Here are my results - some quite surprising!

No prizes for guessing that the first to put out roots (within two weeks) were *Persicaria microcephala* 'Red Dragon'; *Sedum erythrostictum* 'Mediovariegatum'; *Stachys lanata*; *Lobelia cardinalis* 'Russian Princess', and *Ajuga reptans* 'Braunherz'. What's more, they all thrived when transferred into soil a few weeks later.

Next to sprout (2 - 4 weeks) were *Tradescantia* (Andersoniana Group) 'Osprey' (though I think all tradescantias quite like water); *Anthemis punctata* ssp. *cupaniana*, and *A. tinctoria* 'E.C. Buxton'; *Teucrium scorodonia* 'Crispum'; *Monarda* 'Gardenview Scarlet' and, surprisingly, a non-hardy begonia and, very surprisingly, *Cosmos atrosanguineus*! And they're all growing well in pots now.

Last to root were *Pachysandra terminalis* 'Variegata'; *Helenium* 'Ruby Tuesday' (couldn't believe that one), a hardy fuchsia and a hydrangea. Also *Euonymus fortunei* 'Emerald Gaiety'.

My failures were *Euphorbia cyparissias* and *Eupatorium purpureum*, plus a few hardy shrubs which did nothing, even after three months.

So whenever a bit of something 'drops off', see what happens when it's left in water for a few weeks. You may be agreeably surprised!

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