

PROPAGATION OF ELAEAGNUS BY CUTTINGS

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The advantages of propagating *Elaeagnus* from cuttings are that it is cheap, there is no problem of suckering, and good growth can be achieved. Strong cuttings are taken between October and December from the current year's growth. Terminal cuttings root better than the thicker basal cuttings although the basal cuttings, when rooted, produce more vigorous plants. The cuttings are made about 12 cm long, wounded at the base, and treated with 4% IBA in talc mixed with an equal quantity of Captan. Ten cuttings are placed around the edge of a 5" clay pot filled with a mixture of five parts 2 to 3 mm grit to one part fine moss peat. The pots are plunged in moist peat on benches heated by electric cables; these are controlled by electronic thermostats using semi-conductor sensors. These sensors are placed in the rooting medium, level with the base of the cuttings, and the temperature is set for 65°F.

The cuttings are covered with 150 gauge clear polythene which is removed once a week and left off overnight to be replaced the next morning after a light watering. Rooting takes about 12 to 16 weeks depending on cultivar. The heating is turned off and the cuttings left in situ until they are potted in early spring. By this time a fibrous root system has developed and these are trimmed before potting into 3-inch peat pots. Our standard compost is used which consists of 45% peat, 45% pulverised bark, 10% grit, 5¼ lb per cu yd 18:11:10 Osmocote, ¾ lb per cu yd superphosphate, 12 oz per cu yd F.T.253, 1 lb per cu yd ferrous sulfate, calcium and magnesium limestone, and Aldrin. Dimilin is added to control sciarid fly.

The plants are kept moist in a polythene tunnel until established; if possible slight bottom heat is helpful. Once new growth takes place, regular pinching at an early stage ensures a bushy plant. Further potting into two litre pots and grown under polythene, *Elaeagnus* × *ebbingei* makes 30 to 45 cm in height. *Elaeagnus pungens* 'Maculata' grown on for another year makes saleable plants the following autumn.

With this method of propagation approximately 90% take is achieved. Previously, when cuttings have been placed in plastic seed trays, very poor rooting occurred. Better drainage and aeration together with a greater depth of rooting medium would explain the success rate in pots. One species we still find difficult to root is *Elaeagnus macrophylla*.

R. THURLOW: Have you tried rooting *E.* 'Limelight', and how successful were you?

J. BEESLEY: We had good results when rooting cuttings taken from some bought in plants in October, but were unsuccessful with cuttings taken from another source.

B. LOCKWOOD: Do you wound cuttings?

J. BEESLEY: Yes.

P. WOOD: Have you tried rooting cuttings taken in January or February? We tried this and had results similar to October cuttings, but the advantage is they occupy the bench space for a shorter time.

J. BEESLEY: No, we haven't tried that late.

B. HUMPHREY: The Clonal Selection Committee would welcome additional clones of *E.p.* 'Maculata' for testing if anyone has a good one.

PROPAGATION IN DENMARK OF SOUR CHERRIES BY CUTTINGS

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There is, in Denmark, a long tradition for the growing of sour cherries and this has expanded rapidly in the last few years.

Sour cherry is now, after apple, the most grown tree fruit in Denmark. Sour cherries requires relatively little regular care and are often grown by farmers. The rapid expansion is in part due to a high demand for juice by the processing industry and in part, to the development of machine harvesting.

Sour cherries belong to the species, *Prunus cerasus* L., and all cultivars which are grown in Denmark are self fertile. By far, the most planted cultivar is 'Stevnsbaer' which has been grown in Denmark for at least 200 years. It is preferred by the processing industry because the fruit is strongly coloured and has a high content of sugar and of acid.

The well-known Danish rose breeder, D.T. Poulsen, has bred two cultivars 'Kelleriis 14' and 'Kelleriis 16'. These are little grown in Denmark but 'Kelleriis 16' is quite frequently planted in Germany.

As machine harvesting requires relatively more space, the normal planting distance is 5×3 metres, which gives about 670 trees per ha.