

PHOTOS COURTESY OF STEVE RENQUIST

Hardwood cuttings from one-year-old wood.



Propagation

Multiplying your plants — known as propagating — is simple when you know what to do

CAROL DALU
Master Gardener

Question: We have weigela shrub in our front yard that has really pretty flowers and I would like to add a few more of these plants to our backyard. I've heard it's possible to make new plants from a current plant. Can you tell me if this is possible and if so how to do it?

Answer: Yes, you can create new plants from plants you already have in your yard. What you are referring to is called propagation, specifically the process of taking cuttings of a vegetative part of the parent plant to create whole new plants. There are a variety of ways to propagate plants, but to get a new plant of your exact Weigela you would propagate using stem cuttings, which produces clones that are genetically identical to the source plant. This type of propagation works well with deciduous shrubs and evergreen trees.

The best time to take stem cuttings is dictated by the type of species of the plant and the type of stem cutting. There are three types of cuttings — softwood, semi-hardwood and hardwood. Softwood cuttings are taken from the new growth when a plant is actively growing. Semi-hardwood cuttings are taken when the stem wood is partially matured or fairly rigid, while hardwood cuttings are taken from the plant when it has completed the growing period and is dormant.

Late fall through late winter is a good time to take hardwood cuttings, so now would be a good time to take cuttings of your weigela shrub.

Propagation by hardwood cuttings is one of the easiest



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The Weigela shrub can be propagated using stem cuttings



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techniques needing just a few supplies — clean clippers or a sharp knife, clean planting trays or pots, rooting hormone, gloves and a soilless mixture of 80 percent perlite and 20 percent peat moss. A greenhouse is not needed.

How to propagate hardwood cuttings:

1. Begin with a healthy plant, one free of disease or pests, and not stressed by drought.

2. Take cuttings from mature, hard parts of stems, ideally wood from last season's growth and about the thickness of a pencil.

3. To prepare the individual cuttings, cut the stems into 6-9 inch lengths, making sure to have a few nodes (where the leaves and buds attach to the stem) in the cutting.

4. To help remember which

end is the top, make the top end cuts at a slant.

5. Dip the bottom end into the rooting hormone, shake off excess.

6. Using a pencil, dowel or stick, make small holes in the planting mix, insert the cuttings and press mixture around the cutting.

7. You can put quite a few cuttings in trays or in the same pot, placing them about one to two inches apart.

8. Gently water the soil mixture so it is thoroughly moist, but not sopping wet.

9. Place outside in a sheltered location; if the location doesn't get rain, make sure to water to keep moist.

10. If a freeze is predicted, bring the cuttings inside and put them back outside when the temperature warms up.

Come spring, check on the cuttings to see if they have rooted. You can do this by gently tugging on them — if it doesn't come loose, it has rooted. Now it's time to transplant into individual pots. As the plants continue to grow they can be removed from their pots



Red Twig Dogwood plant with brilliant red branches

and planted in your backyard.

A small sampling of other shrubs and trees that can be propagated by hardwood cuttings include barberry (*Berberis*), mock orange (*Philadelphus*), red twig dogwood (*Cornus sericea*), rosemary, rhododendron, Oregon grape (*Mahonia aquifolium*), Yew, holly (*Ilex*), heather, heath, pine, arborvitae, fir, juniper mountain laurel, and false cypress (*Chamaecyparis*). Some fruit species can also be propagated this way, such as fig, grape, and some plums.

If you wish to explore making your own rooting tonic, visit this Oregon State University

webpage for easy instructions, extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening/techniques/how-make-rooting-tonic.

For more detailed information on propagating shrubs, vines and trees from stem cuttings visit this website, where you can download a free publication catalog. extension.oregonstate.edu/pnw152.

Do you have a gardening question? Email, call, or visit the Douglas County Master Gardener Plant Clinic at douglasmg@oregonstate.edu, 541-672-4461, or 1134 S.E. Douglas Ave., Roseburg.