

Have you ever wanted a copy of a Rhody out of your garden? Perhaps, one in a friend's garden?

You can do it! Yes you! Taking cuttings of Rhodys is not difficult. It takes no special equipment. So let's talk about it.

First how do you take a cutting? Go to the Rhody you wish to duplicate. Go to the north side. Look at the lower half of the plant, and look for the longest and skinniest new growth. Chose one with a leaf bud, which will be smaller than bloom buds. Cut it off at the base with clippers and put it in a glass of water.

Now we are going to prepare our equipment. Find a paper, or foam cup. Use one from a drink of coffee, or pop. Find one about four inches tall.

Take a pencil and punch a hole in the side, just at the bottom. Then punch three more holes around the bottom.

Fill the cup with a mix of two parts of perlite, and three parts peat moss. The mix must be well saturated with water. Get three drinking straws, which, after putting in the cutting, will stand up around the perimeter of the cup. Also get a rubber band to secure a cover over the cutting. I have used the plastic bags that a newspaper comes in, a piece of shrinkwrap, or a sandwich bag.

Now we're going to prepare the cutting. Take a razor blade and cut off extra leaves, (no more than two or three), and cut the remaining leaves in half, crossways. Then trim the stem to about three inches, or your longest finger length. This cut should be at an angle. Take this bottom end and wound the side from about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch from the bottom to the end. Turn the stem around, and do the other side. These wounds are deep enough to strip off bark, but only slightly into the stem.

Now get out your rooting powder, or liquid. *Warning!* The rooting powder available at most nurseries comes in 0.1 percent. This is too weak for Rhodys.

I suggest:

- Hormodin #3, which is 0.8 percent
- Rootone F, which is 0.2 percent of a different compound
- Dip-n-grow, which is a liquid concentrate, and is a combination of the above two compounds.

Take a little rooting compound, and put it out where you can dip the cutting up to the top of the wounds, in the compound. Now take a pencil and punch a hole about three inches deep into the center of the mix in the cup. Carefully insert the cutting, compacting the mix around the cutting after insertion. Put on the plastic cover, held up by the straws, and secured by the rubber band, over the cutting. Done! Well almost.

Find a place to put the cutting. A saucer would work. Find a lamp to put the cutting under. Then each day take a plant atomizer bottle, and give it a shot of water on the leaves. In about a month, take off the plastic cover, and give the leaves a little tug. If the cutting resists the tug, it is rooted. Continue as before. In a couple of months, think about potting the new plant.

Congratulations!

Now try several!