

Activity: Propagation Goal: Social Populations: All but dementia

TH Activity Plan – Herb Propagation by Cuttings

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Photo by D. Relf, Rural Sprout, Homestead & Chill, Sask Today.ca



Materials

herb cuttings (8 per persons)
potting medium
6" pots
pruners
plastic to cover pots
small scoops
skewers
rooting hormone
marker, pencils
plant labels
larger waterproof tray for
bottom watering
gloves optional, wipes

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Participants will propagate herbs from cuttings.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Learn about herbs, propagation skills; cognitive practice of following sequential steps

Physical: Strengthen hand dexterity, pincer grip using scissors/pruners

Psychological/Emotional: Practice connecting emotionally to plants & other participants

Sensory: Address & practice sensory challenges by touching plant materials, water, soil

Social: Practice nurturing skills caring for plants; create a new plant through herb cuttings

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Prep:** Gather softwood (tip) cuttings 3-6" with 3-4 leaf nodes per person (pp) & set up each work area. Prepare moist medium for pots. Herbs: lemon verbena, lavender, sage, oregano, mint, catnip, hyssop, thyme, rosemary.
2. Facilitator begins session by demonstrating propagation procedure.
3. Participants fill their pots near to top, making holes for cuttings with pencil or finger.
4. Prepare cutting by re-cutting stem below lowest node, remove leaves from lower half, dip in rooting hormone, placing cutting into hole.
5. Water thoroughly.
6. Write participant's name, plant name, date & attach to container.
7. Place individual pots in larger tray, cover with plastic to hold moisture in, using skewers to hold plastic off plants. Place in filtered light area (preferably with some humidity).
8. Monitor cuttings for condensation, humidity & soil conditions allowing 4-10 weeks for rooting to occur. (Some plants may need to be moved to larger pots).

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: Appropriate for most populations except people living with dementia or others who might put items in mouths or be careless with pruning shears. Can be used as vocational training &/or as mass propagation for fundraising. Discussion on herbs-

culinary, medicinal & nutritional attributes can extend session, as can growing herbs from seed. Discussion on nurturing (self & plant) can provide life skills and horticulture lessons. Addressing sensory discomfort for those who might experience this touching plant materials can integrate a therapeutic intervention using plants as the medium. Gloves may provide an adaptation appropriate for a participant's threshold.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Check for allergies to plants, potting medium or rooting hormone & watch for participants who might put items in mouths or mishandling of pruners. For those with intellectual, attention or physical challenges, consider tasking them with filling containers with potting medium (single focus, adaptation to their physical functioning). Make gloves & wipes available. Sun protection is recommended for outdoor sessions.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: Spring or summer seasons are ideal for this activity when herbs are healthy and thriving. Typically, the session will take 40 min + 20 min. for cleanup. Potting medium - clean, coarse, construction-grade sand (avoid very fine sand due to poor aeration which retards root formation). A mixture of equal parts sand & peat moss is also a good rooting medium as well as equal parts sterile potting mix and perlite. Rooting hormone may be required for rosemary & lavender.

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

RHS. (n.d.). Herbs: Propagating. <https://www.rhs.org.uk/propagation/propagating-herbs>

Salinas, M., Park Brown, S. & Stephens, J.M. (2021). Herbs and spices in the Florida Garden. *University of Florida Institute of Food and Science*. <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/VH020>

Soil Association. (n.d.). How to grow herbs from cuttings. <https://www.soilassociation.org/take-action/growing-at-home/5-herbs-to-grow-at-home/how-to-grow-herbs-from-cuttings/>



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TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2023.